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THE
DEFENCE OF PIEDMONT
1742–1748

A Prelude to the Study of
NAPOLEON

By

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1927

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FRIEND

GENERAL JEAN COLIN

THE MASTER OF
MILITARY HISTORY

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17697

PREFACE

THE chief result of the Napoleonic studies of the last forty years has been to show how great was the debt of Napoleon as a general to his French predecessors of the eighteenth century. He was steeped in the doctrines set forth by Bourcet in his *Principes de la Guerre de Montagnes*. He had studied the campaigns of Conti and of Maillebois in the War of the Austrian Succession, and at every stage of his early campaigns in Italy, from the close of the siege of Toulon until the battle of Lodi, are to be seen the effect on his mind of the lessons of the previous war in that theatre. It is hardly too much to say that from Conti, from Maillebois, and from Bourcet, he inherited the keys of Italy.

It was to lay bare for English readers the roots of Napoleon's generalship that the studies of which this book is the outcome were begun. In the course of the work I could not but discover that the military movements of all the armies in Italy during the campaigns with which I had to deal were unintelligible without some knowledge of the political conditions. I was compelled, therefore, in the interest of my readers to attempt a sketch of the intricate political environment in which the several commanders had to act. I venture to hope that the result may be to exemplify that interdependence of generalship and policy which is after all the first and last lesson of the history of wars.

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During the last twenty years I have frequently spent my vacations in examining the passes of the western Alps, many of which are fortified. Nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy with which I have been permitted to visit these regions. For this freedom I have to thank the officers who in turn have been either Minister of War or Chief of the General Staff of the Italian Army, as well as the Generals commanding at Turin and Alessandria. In 1924, Major Dacomo of the 3rd Regiment of Alpini was good enough to escort me to the Col delle Finestre.

I have to thank Marshal Foch for kind permission to examine the military archives at Paris, where I recall with gratitude the kindness of M. Tuetey, Archivist at the Historical Section.

I am deeply indebted to Lieut.-General Gliamas, formerly Director of the Military Geographical Institute at Florence, for permission to reproduce parts of the Italian map of Italy, and to Colonel Winterbotham, chief of the Geographical Section General Staff, for his kind help in the preparation of the map of Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice in 1740.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College for facilitating by a generous contribution towards its cost the publication of my work.

S. W.

All Souls College,
January 22, 1927.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION. The Alps and Savoy . . 1

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR.

1. The Settlement of the Spanish Succession. Disappointment of Charles VI; his Pragmatic Sanction. Position of Victor Amadeus 9
2. Elizabeth Farnese 13
3. Spanish Attempts upon Italy, 1717-32 . . 18
4. Charles Emmanuel and the War of the Polish Succession 21

II. CHARLES EMMANUEL DETERMINES HIS POLICY.

1. Maria Theresa and the Powers . . . 26
2. The Spanish Army in Italy; the Convention of Turin 35

III. 1742: THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR IN ITALY.

1. Modena and Mirandola. Martin at Naples . 43
2. Don Philip in Provence. Bourcet's Account of the Frontier. The Spaniards occupy Savoy, which Charles Emmanuel recovers but abandons 54

IV. 1743: SPANISH DEFEATS IN EAST AND WEST.

1. Eighteenth-century Armies . . . 67
2. Campo Santo 73
3. The Treaty of Worms. Chianale. Recall of Traun 82

V. 1744: CONTI TAKES NICE BUT NOT CUNEO.

1. Treaty of Fontainebleau. Battle of Toulon. De Gages retreats before Lobkowitz. Capture of Villefranche 98
2. Discordant Plans of France and Spain . . 121
3. The March into Dauphiné . . . 132

Digitized by Google

4. The Barricades and Pietralunga . . 145
5. Demonte, Cuneo, Madonna dell' Olmo . 160
6. Velletri. Retreat of Lobkowitz . . 178

VI. 1745: Success of Maillebois.

1. Appointment of d'Argenson; Genoa joins France and Spain; Treaty of Aranjuez. Preparations for the New Campaign . 191
2. Campaign of Maillebois. Battle of Bassignana 202

VII. 1746: Ruin of Maillebois.

1. D'Argenson's Negotiation . . . 226
2. Surprise of Asti 237
3. Battle of Piacenza 249
4. The combined army surrounded. Death of Philip V. Maillebois extricates the army. Retreat to Voghera. La Mina resumes the Command 253
5. Abandonment of Genoa. Retreat to Provence. Dismissal of Maillebois . . . 259

VIII. Belle-Isle and Genoa.

1. Invasion of Provence. Belle-Isle's Retreat. Rising of Genoa. Belle-Isle recovers Provence 279
2. Siege of Genoa 287
3. Belle-Isle occupies the county of Nice. His Plan for the Invasion of Piedmont . . 294
4. The Assietta 303
5. Relief of Ventimiglia. Defence of Genoa. Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle . . . 315

Appendix A. Genealogies 329
„ B. Maillebois's Memorandum on Supply 330
„ C. Maillebois's instructions to Mirepoix. 332

Bibliographical Note 335

Index 337

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LIST OF MAPS

Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice in 1740 . *In cover at end*
Routes through the Alps in Eleventh Century . . 2
Central Italy, to illustrate the movements of Spaniards and Austrians in the Peninsula 44
Modena and Emilia: Campaigns of Montemar and de Gages 46
The Alpine Frontier 58
The Critical Days in Savoy 62
Battle of Campo Santo 74
Operations in 1743-44 . . . *facing page* 87
Chianale and Pietralunga . . . „ „ 89
The Defences of Villefranche, 1744 . . . 114
The county of Nice and the Western Riviera . . 116
The Col de la Madeleine and the Barricades *facing page* 135
Operations in 1743-44 (July 10) 142
„ „ (July 11) 143
„ „ (July 15) 144
„ „ (July 16) 145
The Barricades 148
Siege of Demonte . . . . *facing page* 161
Battle of Madonna dell' Olmo and Siege of Cuneo . 166
Saluzzo to Ronchi 168
Velletri: Austrian and Spanish-Neapolitan Camps . 180
Riviera di Ponente and part of Montferrat . . 204
Montferrat: To illustrate the Surprise of Asti . . 210
Alessandria to Piacenza 216
Mont Agel 270
Provence 276
Genoa and surrounding country 288
The Campaign of the Assietta . . *facing page* 297
Operations for the relief of Ventimiglia . . . 320

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Note on the Maps.

THE map of Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice in 1740 gives a view of the territories of the King of Sardinia at that epoch, and of the Alps between France and Italy. The movements of the troops in the several campaigns can be followed by the aid of the special maps and sketches in the text, each of which is placed on a left-hand page at the point when the story which it illustrates is about to begin. It is hoped that this arrangement will facilitate reference backwards in the subsequent course of the story. The attempt has been made to give in one or another of these maps every place mentioned in the text and no others; but as there are more than a thousand names there may be undetected omissions.

The necessary smallness of scale has compelled the omission of

Pontemolle, the bridge over the Tiber just north of Rome, and Acquatraversa, the first village beyond it.

St. Catherine, the southern suburb of Briançon.

Molere, between Ceva and Malpotremo (map, p. 204).

The following, inadvertently omitted, might be noted on the sketches:

Map on or *facing page*

44. Cesenatico, between Rimini and Ravenna, p. 190.
Civita Vecchia, between Orbetello and Fiumicino, p. 182.

87. Boves, three miles east of Borgo San Dalmazzo, p. 162.
Mirabouc Fort, on eastern descent from Col de la Croix, p. 60.
Monestier, between Briançon and Le Lauzet, p. 126.
Ponsonnière, Col de la, between Valloire and Le Lauzet, p. 87.
Pourriac, Col de, between Argentera and Vens, p. 299.
San Rocco, five miles west of Cuneo, p. 163.

210. Morano, on north bank of Po, between Trino and Casale, p. 222.

216. Pontecurone, between Tortona and Voghera, p. 246.
Montebello, three miles west of Casteggio, p. 247.

General Map.

Sesto Calende, at south end of Lago Maggiore, p. 224.
Turbigo, east bank of Ticino north of Magenta, p. 224.
Porto Fino, on the peninsula between Genoa and Chiavari, p. 293.
Salino, in Vara Valley below Varese, p. 327.

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INTRODUCTION

The Alps and Savoy

In one of his sonnets to Laura, Petrarch vowed that, as he could not carry her name to all the four parts of the world, it should at least be heard by

> the fair land
> That Apennine divides and the sea and the Alps enclose.[1]

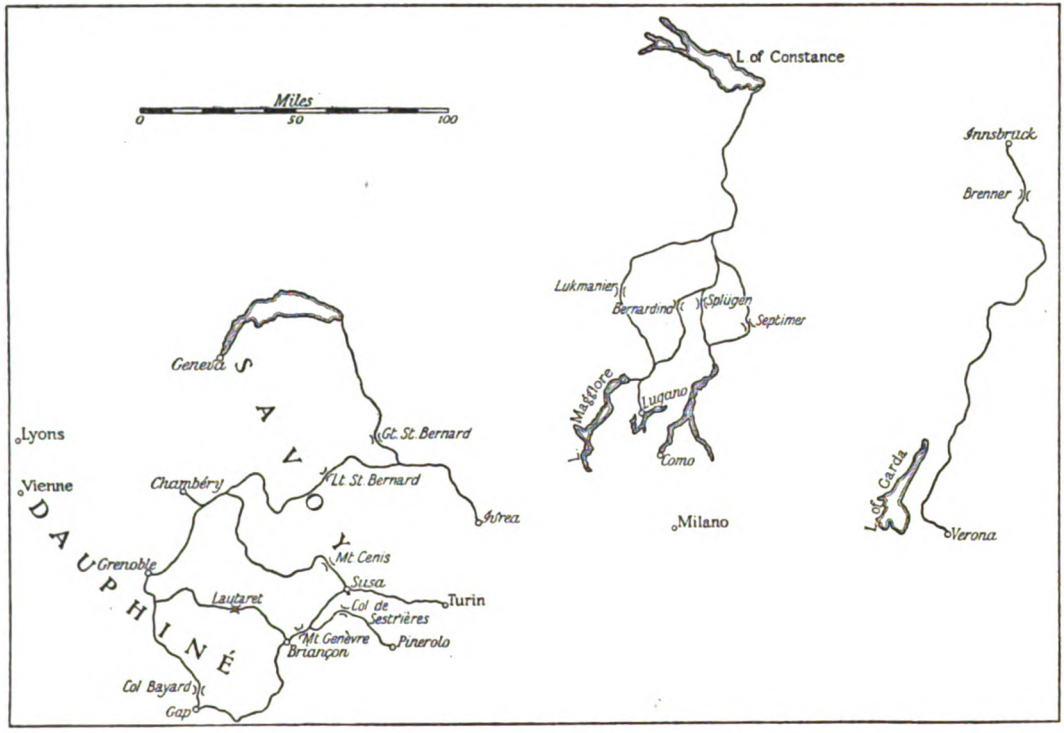
Petrarch had found what Metternich was to call the 'geographical expression' of Italy. But not until Metternich's time was its meaning to dawn on those most concerned, and even now its purport only begins to be realized.

The sea and the Alps are natural frontiers each with its peculiar qualities. The sea sets bounds to the land, but is no protection, for it is the great highway, the path of invasion. By sea came to Italy Greeks, Saracens, Normans, Spaniards, and Frenchmen. The instrument of defence by sea is a navy, as the Romans found out in their struggle with Carthage. In the middle ages Venice and Genoa had their argosies and their galleys to bring home the spices of the East and to transport the crusaders of the West. But in the age of the modern invasions of Italy Venice was busy in the Levant and Genoa lent her fleets in turn to France, Spain and Austria. In the eighteenth century such protection by sea as Italy obtained was given to her by the British navy. Even in the nineteenth century after 1815 the British navy without action by its mere preponderance gave the national movement in Italy a support which, if fully appreciated neither by those who gave nor those who received it, was none the less real.

The Alps are a mighty rampart. But a rampart requires defenders in possession of it. While great stretches of the

[1] il bel paese
Ch' Appennin parte, e 'l mar circonda e l' Alpe.

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Routes through the Alps in Eleventh Century.

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Alpine wall were French or Austrian territory the Alps could not be a bulwark of Italy. It was in order to become fully mistress of her natural defences that Italy as a nation entered into the last great war.

After six hundred years Petrarch's line has received its interpretation. Hands have been joined across the dividing Apennines; a nation holds the Alps as a shield and begins to hear the call of the encircling sea, the call to empire.

The unity of Italy, the creation of the modern kingdom, has been in the main the work of the House of Savoy. The princes of that house have followed for 900 years with remarkable steadfastness a policy to which the clue is to be found in the situation athwart the Alps of their original home. The political importance of the Alps is due to their being an obstacle to communication and especially to the movement of armies. No route through the Alps is less than 130 miles long, and every one of them, during the greater part of its length, is a defile in which troops can move only by a single track. An army marching along a road has its troops stretched out in a thread and a long time is needed before enough of them, either for attack or for defence, can be collected at one point. In the Alps until the end of the eighteenth century there was no road across any pass; at the best there was only a mule track. On a mule track in the mountains troops must move in Indian file, and the pace varies according as they go up or down hill. The column therefore becomes many times longer than it would be on a road in level country. Not more than seven or eight thousand men can be moved as a whole from one camp to another along a mountain track in a day, and many hours would be needed to collect half of them at any point on the route. In every Alpine pass there is from time to time a gorge so narrow, between mountains so steep and high, that a small body of troops can resist the attack of any force that in the conditions of movement just described can be brought against it. The gorges at the ends of the passes have always been fortified, and it has always been dangerous for an army to commit itself

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to an Alpine pass unless the castle or fortress controlling the exit was in its possession or at least in friendly hands.

The first Count of Savoy, Humbert called Whitehand, was the feudal lord of the territory which contained the passes of the Great and Little St. Bernard and the Mont Cenis, all of which he controlled and from which he derived revenue in the shape of tolls taken from travellers and merchants. His overlord was Rudolf, King of Burgundy, and he must have been a party to the agreement made in 1027 between Rudolf and Canute, King of Denmark and England, for the safe passage and moderate taxation of Danish and English travellers by the St. Bernard and the Mont Cenis.

The history and policy of the House of Savoy are the outcome of the effect of these passes on the prosperity and the security of its territories. From the tenth to the end of the fourteenth century the dominant factor in the European system of nations was the Holy Roman Empire with its claim to supremacy in Italy. Access to Italy was vital to the Emperors. The first three Ottos had only two sets of routes. They could go from Innsbruck to Verona by the Brenner or from the Lake of Constance to Milan by the passes which come down either to the Lake of Como or to the Lake Maggiore. Each of these was liable to be blocked by the holders of the gorges at its Italian end. Neither the St. Gotthard nor the Simplon was practicable before the middle of the thirteenth century. Until then the Alps were an impassable barrier for the stretch of ninety miles between the Lukmanier and the Great St. Bernard. But when, in 1032, the Emperor Conrad II (the Salic) inherited the kingdom of Burgundy, so that the Count of Savoy became his vassal, he obtained the use of the passes through Savoy and he and his successors could thus go through the western Alps and if necessary turn all the obstacles created for them in the Central Alps. As gate-keepers of the western passes and as loyal adherents of the Emperors, the Counts of Savoy acquired an importance which increased from age to age until the

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fifteenth century found them Dukes of Savoy, Princes of Piedmont, and lords of the county of Nice and the valley of Barcelonnette.

The European transformation of the fifteenth century completely changed their position. While the Emperor had shrunk into a merely German potentate, the King of France had become a great power, the master of Dauphiné, through which ran the central pass of the western Alps, that of Mont Genèvre. The Duke of Savoy could be of no use to an Emperor who had no business in Italy, and his services were not required by a King of France who, through a pass of his own, could send his army into Piedmont and turn the routes that belonged to Savoy. The Duke of Savoy could not prevent the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII, still less that by Louis XII in alliance with Milan; and, in the great struggle between Francis I and Charles V, Savoy and Piedmont were overrun and almost entirely annexed by the French. The failure of France and the triumph of Spain led to the restoration of Emmanuel Philibert, the son of the dispossessed Duke of Savoy, a restoration which he had earned by his success as a Spanish general.

Emmanuel Philibert (1553-80) divined a policy suitable to the conditions of his time and to what he saw must be their outcome. The source of his wealth and strength was in Piedmont not in Savoy, and therefore Turin not Chambéry must be his capital. His territory was too small to support an independent power; his successors must enlarge it; for expansion they must look not to the west, where France consolidated was too strong for them, but to the east, to divided Italy. Piedmont, in order to be independent, must acquire the control of those passes of which France still held the exits into Italy. With these aims she must tie herself permanently neither to France nor to Spain; she must from time to time side with whichever Power would help her; allied with Spain she might wrest from France the keys of the Alpine passes; allied with France she might acquire the Duchy of Milan.

Emmanuel Philibert married his son, Charles Em-

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manuel I, to the daughter of Philip II of Spain, the heiress, in case there should be a failure of male heirs, of the Duchy of Milan. Charles Emmanuel (1580–1630) put into practice the policy his father had suggested, of siding alternately with France and Spain. From Henry IV he obtained Saluzzo in exchange for Bresse and Bugey beyond the Rhone and eventually negotiated with him a treaty according to which, with French assistance, he was to conquer the Duchy of Milan and to give Savoy to France in exchange for it. But it had hardly been signed when Henry was assassinated. Charles Emmanuel's dealings with Richelieu ended in the seizure by the French of Pinerolo, which he was fighting to relieve when he died. His successor, Victor Amadeus I (1630–7), was persuaded by his wife Christina, daughter of Henry IV, to agree to a peace by which France retained Pinerolo. That fortress commanded the exit into the plain of Piedmont from the French pass of Mont Genèvre in Dauphiné, the easiest of all the passes over the Alps. The possession of Pinerolo gave the French an open door into Piedmont, and for fifty years the Dukes of Savoy had to be the obedient servants of the French King.

It was reserved for Victor Amadeus II (1680–1730) to carry out a part of the programme sketched by Emmanuel Philibert. By siding with the allies of the League of Augsburg against Louis XIV he was able in the treaty of Turin to recover Pinerolo. The War of the Spanish Succession placed him in a desperate dilemma. Before it began he must either accept the alliance of Louis or expect his territory to be occupied and annexed by France. He therefore acquiesced in the alliance with Louis. But when the Grand Alliance had been formed and Louis was therefore no longer all-powerful, it became clear that by assisting Louis in the conquest of Milan for Philip V he was merely helping to imprison his dominions between a Bourbon King of France and a Bourbon King of Spain. If he changed sides there was a chance that he might turn the balance against Louis. He took the risk, and after a hard struggle succeeded. The French, indeed, captured all

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his fortresses except Turin and Cuneo, and were besieging Turin with a large army when, in the nick of time, Prince Eugène came to its relief and the French army was defeated and driven out of Italy. Marlborough then urged that the Austrian and Piedmontese armies should invade Provence, but the Emperor Joseph preferred the invasion of Naples, to which he devoted part of his army, and, as the Austrian forces were thus divided, the invasion of Provence was a failure. Victor Amadeus, however, with Eugène's assistance, wrested from France the fortresses of Fenestrelle and Exilles, which commanded the Italian side of the pass of Mont Genèvre. In the Treaty of Utrecht Victor Amadeus ceded to France the valley of Barcelonnette, which is on the French side of the water-parting, and received for himself all the territory on the Italian slope, so that in the space between Savoy and Nice the water-parting line became the frontier between France and Piedmont.

The first great aim of Emmanuel Philibert, the possession of a defensible frontier in the western Alps, was thus at last attained. Its importance was to be revealed in two great European wars. In the first of these, which forms the subject of this volume, the son of Victor Amadeus was able with Austrian help to defeat every attempt of the combined forces of France and Spain to break through his Alpine frontier. In the fourth year of the war the French Marshal Maillebois was able to turn the Alpine frontier and invade Piedmont from the Genoese Riviera, but dissensions between France and Spain, the blunders of French diplomacy and the loyalty of Austria to her Italian ally, proved the ruin of French strategy and the salvation of Piedmont.

In the next generation the same drama was repeated. For four years Piedmont successfully defended her Alpine frontier against the armies of the French revolution. In the fifth year Bonaparte, the pupil of Maillebois, adopted that general's plan of turning the Alpine frontier and Piedmont, deserted by Austria, succumbed.

By their exertions in these two great wars Piedmont

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and the House of Savoy had well served Europe and Italy. The restored kingdom of Sardinia was to resume the policy of Emmanuel Philibert in accordance with which his successors had over and over again been ready to give up Savoy and Nice in exchange for the Duchy of Milan. Victor Emmanuel I made the same sacrifice and received in return not only the Duchy of Milan but the Kingdom of Italy.

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I. THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR

1. *The Settlement of the Spanish Succession. Disappointment of Charles VI; his Pragmatic Sanction. Position of Victor Amadeus*

THE settlement which follows a great European war is usually a series of compromises. When the chief belligerents by a prolonged trial of strength have realized which way the balance inclines they are apt to agree among themselves upon the main points at issue and then to deal summarily and arbitrarily with the interests of their several allies. Yet those allies tenaciously cling to the rights which they feel have been ignored or overlooked, and still cherish the purposes which they had expected to achieve; their unfulfilled aims are not abandoned and become the seeds of future disputes.

The provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht, amazingly favourable to Louis XIV and strangely satisfactory to its Tory negotiators, bitterly disappointed the other parties chiefly concerned, the Emperor Charles VI, Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, and Philip V of Spain.

Charles VI was obsessed by a few fixed ideas and could never see the world as it really is. He failed to understand that the support of the Maritime Powers to his claim to the Spanish Crown, based on the principle of the balance of power, was bound to be withdrawn when he succeeded to the Austrian Dominions. He still expected his allies to obtain for him the whole Spanish Monarchy. The brunt of the war had been borne by England, Holland, and Savoy, yet when, in the negotiations at Utrecht, they were able to offer him the Netherlands, the Duchies of Milan and Mantua, the Tuscan Ports called the Presidii,[1]

[1] The Presidii were the four Tuscan ports: Orbetello, Telamone, Porto Ercole, and Porto Stefano, together with Porto Longone in the island of Elba.

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the Kingdom of Naples and the island of Sardinia, he refused to discuss these terms and continued the war alone against France. But even Eugène could effect nothing with the forces that now remained, and in 1714 the Emperor had to make peace with France on the terms which he had refused at Utrecht. He made no peace with Philip V and for many years still considered himself King of Spain.

From the time when he succeeded to the Austrian dominions the main preoccupation of his life, dominating his policy, was to secure the transmission of all his dominions undivided to his successor. Though his regulation of the succession is familiar to readers of history, the circumstances of its origin have hardly been explained by English writers, yet are worth noting, for they throw an interesting light on the condition of the Austrian monarchy.

Charles had married in 1708 but had no child when, on Joseph's death in 1711, he returned from Spain to take over the Austrian dominions, leaving his wife at Barcelona to represent him in Spain. In March 1712 the Estates of Croatia, always apprehensive of a Turkish invasion, were anxious that whoever succeeded in Croatia should also succeed to other territories large enough and strong enough together with Croatia to be capable of resistance to Turkey. They therefore sent to Charles a resolution that in case of his death without male issue they would recognize the succession to the crown of Croatia of whichever Archduchess should succeed to the Duchy of Austria, together with Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola. This was an invitation to Charles to regulate the succession, which he, and he alone, had a right to do.[1] He drew up the Pragmatic Sanction, by which he laid down the three principles of primogeniture, of the indivisibility of his inheritance and of the right of female succession. The

[1] *Oesterreichischer Erbfolge-Krieg, 1740-8.* Nach den Feld-Acten und andern authentischen Quellen bearbeitet in der kriegsgeschichtlichen Abtheilung des K. und K. Kriegs-Archivs, Wien, 1896, I. Band, p. 16.

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principle of primogeniture, according to the Austrian interpretation, gives the succession to the children of the actual head of the House in order of age, first the sons and then the daughters; these daughters having priority over the daughters of a former head. Accordingly Charles was to be succeeded by his sons in order of age, failing a son by his daughters in order of age, failing a daughter by the daughters of Joseph, also in order of age. This Pragmatic Sanction was communicated in 1713 to the Privy Council but not published.

In 1716 Charles had a son, who died in the same year. In 1717 was born a daughter, Maria Theresa, and in 1718 a second daughter. Thereupon the Pragmatic Sanction was published and Charles obtained its recognition by the Estates of all his Kingdoms and Provinces. When Joseph's daughters were married in 1719 and 1722 to the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria, they and their husbands formally renounced all claims to the Austrian Succession. For the rest of the Emperor's life the main object of his policy was to procure from the various Powers of Europe treaties guaranteeing the Succession as he had laid it down.

The choice of a husband for Maria Theresa became a matter of political importance. In 1723 Charles received at his Court Francis, the fifteen-year-old son of his old friend the Duke of Lorraine, who was to be brought up under his auspices. It was soon understood that Francis was the destined husband of the Archduchess, who grew up regarding him in that light. The Emperor, however, though he allowed and encouraged this affection between the young couple, could not sanction a formal betrothal, for France was firmly opposed to a marriage which would have added Lorraine to the Austrian dominions. The definite disposal of his daughter's hand depended on the course of the Emperor's diplomacy.

The weakness of Charles VI was shown in his belief that he could make safe his daughter's succession by treaties with foreign powers, though it ought to have been obvious that, as Eugène is said to have told him, a good army and a full treasury would be a better security. He

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never realized that distant possessions like Naples and the Netherlands were exposed to invasion but made no proportionate addition to his strength. Above all, he failed to see the wisdom of conciliating the goodwill of those Powers whose help in case of a fresh conflict with France would be invaluable. He needlessly estranged the King of Prussia by his tortuous handling of the succession to Julich and Cleve. His short-sighted policy also alienated the Duke of Savoy.

When Victor Amadeus joined the Grand Alliance in 1703, he had stipulated with the Emperor Leopold that he should receive at the peace the province of Vigevano, the Marquisate of Finale, and the districts called the Langhe on the northern slope of the Apennines. The Emperor did not ratify this treaty, but in 1704 the British Government guaranteed these acquisitions to Savoy. The services of Victor Amadeus to the Allies during the war and the sacrifices which they cost him far outweighed these small territorial concessions. His assistance turned the scale in favour of the Allies, at any rate in Italy. That this was the case is proved by the admission of his representative to the Congress at Utrecht. He hoped to realize the great aim of his House by obtaining the Duchy of Milan; Queen Anne and the British Ministry approved of the proposal; but the Emperor had set his heart upon Milan, where his troops were in possession. The British negotiators therefore obtained for Victor Amadeus the island of Sicily with the title of King. They were anxious that the harbours of Sicily should be held by a small Power dependent for protection on the British Navy. Sicily was not what Victor Amadeus wanted. Without a fleet and without a harbour accessible from Piedmont he could not defend it; the Sicilians liked the Spaniards and detested the Piedmontese. Victor Amadeus had to accept what was offered him; but the British negotiators left him to settle the question of the western frontier of Piedmont with Charles VI, who, furious at not receiving Sicily for himself, insisted on keeping both Vigevano and the Langhe and sold Finale to Genoa.

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The one permanent advantage gained by Victor Amadeus at Utrecht was that by exchanging Barcelonnette for Fenestrelle and Exilles he pushed his frontier to the Col of Mont Genèvre and thus acquired a defensible Alpine frontier.

ii. *Elizabeth Farnese*

PHILIP V had inherited from Charles II the whole Spanish Monarchy. The Treaty of Utrecht had torn it in two and taken from him all his European possessions except Spain, and even Spain was deprived of Gibraltar and Minorca, both of which became English. Moreover, Philip had to confirm his renunciation of his right to succeed to the French Crown and also to open to the British, though no doubt with certain restrictions, the trade of his American colonies. These losses and concessions, though the natural result of the turn taken by the war, were a terrible blow to Spanish pride. Philip was obliged to accept the terms made for him by his grandfather, Louis XIV, but did so subject to the mental reservation, of which his confessor approved, that he would be bound by none of them.

In 1714 Philip lost his young Queen, Maria Gabriella (daughter of Victor Amadeus), who left two sons, Luis and Ferdinand. An indolent hypochondriac, Philip had been entirely governed by her and she had allowed herself to be controlled by the Princess Orsini, the agent chosen by Louis XIV as the medium for his own direction of Spanish policy. The death of Maria Louisa paralysed Philip, who could not exist without a wife. The Princess Orsini, at the suggestion of the Duke of Parma's agent Alberoni, proposed to him a match with Elizabeth Farnese, niece of the Duke of Parma, heiress of that Duchy and of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. This marriage seemed to be politically advantageous, as it would strengthen Philip's desire to recover what he had lost in Italy and his claims in that country, and it attracted Philip, for he was pleased with the lady's portrait.

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Elizabeth was married by proxy at Parma (16 September 1714). She then had to make the long journey to Spain. No peace had been concluded between the King of Spain and the Emperor and it was not thought prudent for her to travel through the Duchy of Milan, which was now Austrian, so she went by Borgotaro to Sestri Levante, where she was met by a squadron of Genoese galleys and embarked on the Admiral's ship for Genoa. Philip had arranged that a Spanish squadron should bring her from Genoa to Alicante, but Elizabeth was very ill on her short but rough passage from Sestri and refused to continue the journey by sea. This seems at first sight a very natural choice, but in the circumstances it was, for a girl of twenty-one, a bold course. Not only did it upset the arrangements made by Philip and postpone her arrival in Spain, but it involved an unusually arduous journey, described fifty years afterwards by Smollett.

'I was resolved', writes Smollett, 'to travel by water. Indeed, there is no other way of going from Nice to Genoa unless you take a mule, and clamber along the mountains at the rate of two miles an hour, and at the risk of breaking your neck every minute. The Apennine Mountains form an almost continuous precipice from Villefranche to Lerici, which is almost 45 miles on the other side of Genoa, and as they are generally washed by the sea, there is no beach or shore, consequently the road is carried along the face of the rocks, except at certain small intervals which are occupied by towns and villages.... Those who either will not or cannot bear the sea, and are equally averse to riding, may be carried in a sedan chair, provided with a foot-board, on men's shoulders.'[1]

Elizabeth was carried in a chair from Genoa to Mentone, where she was received by Grimaldi, Prince of Monaco, who, though nominally independent, was in fact the obedient servant of Louis XIV. Grimaldi reported to Torcy, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, his reception and entertainment of the young Queen.

'She is of medium height; well-built; her face long rather than oval, strongly marked by small-pox, even scarred, but not so as to be distressing. Her head is nobly poised; she has

[1] Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, Letter XXV. See also Letter XXXV.

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blue eyes, not very large, but as sparkling and as expressive as possible; her mouth is pretty large, adorned by admirable teeth, often revealed by the most amiable of smiles. Her voice is charming. She talks graciously to every one; they say that what she says comes from her heart. She is passionately fond of music; she sings, she paints very prettily, rides and hunts; Spanish is the only language she does not know. Heart of a Lombard, wits of a Florentine; she has a will of her own.'

Elizabeth had written from Genoa to obtain the consent of Philip to the new plan of her journey, which was given reluctantly as Philip was impatient to receive his bride. She had also asked permission of Louis XIV to travel through France. It was readily given and Louis instructed the Governors of the provinces to receive her with royal honours. She made a leisurely progress through Provence and Languedoc. On crossing the Rhone at Arles she was received by the Governor of Languedoc with a brilliant escort commanded by the Marquis de Maillebois, who twenty-one years later as a Marshal of France was to experience the disastrous effects of her imperious will.

At Pau she spent ten days with her aunt, Mary Anne of Neuburg, the widow of Charles II of Spain, now living in exile in comparative poverty. From her she learned something of the kind of life which awaited her.

'Elizabeth was well aware of Philip's impatience. But she gave no sign of being disturbed by it and in no way put herself out. A man under sentence of death hardly hurries on his way to execution. Yet no situation more aptly describes that of any foreign princess who in those days was on her way to share the bed of the King of Spain. On crossing the Spanish frontier she said good-bye for ever to her country, her family, her friends, her pleasures, and her freedom. In an instant her whole surroundings were changed. Every face wore a prescribed expression of solemnity. Even the dress of every one about her reflected in its sad and sombre hue the same sullen air. She was likely to have been scared in advance by all the talk she had heard about life at the Court of Spain. There etiquette reigned supreme. The King and Queen, the courtiers, the ministers, the ladies in waiting, all alike were its subjects and slaves. . . . Fettering their will, breaking their springs, suppressing their activity, resenting even their smiles, it reduced them to automata. . . . It was always percolating drop by drop through the walls of the funereal palaces where dwelt the Queen, inviolable, inaccessible, like a fetish, enduring the in-

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cessant insipid monotony of unwilling homage and sterile honours. Ceremonial suppressed her free will; if the King were to neglect her she would be the most useless woman in Spain.'[1]

All this Elizabeth would fully realize during her stay with her aunt at Pau and she would also perceive the kind of situation which would be hers in case she should become a widow. Queen Mary Anne detested the Princess Orsini, whom she regarded as the cause of her exile, and of this she certainly made no secret. At Pampeluna Elizabeth was joined by Alberoni, who explained to her the character of Philip, too indolent to think or act for himself and therefore ruled by another. If that other should not be his wife, his wife would be a cipher. Alberoni also undoubtedly fully explained the character and position of the Princess Orsini, and Elizabeth would not be slow to take any hints he might give her as to the most effective means of dealing with that lady.

Elizabeth then pushed on towards Guadalajara, where Philip was to meet her. At Jadraque, one stage before Guadalajara, she was met by the Princess Orsini, determined to lose no time in establishing an ascendancy such as she had exercised over the late Queen.

The young Queen received the Princess courteously and graciously, and dismissing her attendants led her to her drawing-room, where they were alone. The Princess entirely misconceived the situation and the character of the young girl. She began by explaining the confidential relation in which she had so long stood to the King and the late Queen. She told her that it was to her that the King's choice of his bride was due, and expressed a hope that the Queen would rely upon her good offices to maintain harmony between herself and her husband. Elizabeth was bound to resent this as an impertinence, and told the Princess to mind her own business. The Princess told her that it was disgraceful to have altered the King's plan of her journey and to have spent three months on her way; that she could not go on next day to meet the King in her

[1] De Courcy, *L'Espagne après la Paix d'Utrecht, 1713-1715*, p. 306.

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travelling costume and must wait at Jadraque a few days to purchase new things; that her dresses were ridiculous, and that to go on next day would be to run after her husband like a common woman. Elizabeth, outraged, sent her from the room, called for the guard and ordered her to be removed from her presence, and escorted across the frontier. She then immediately wrote to Philip telling him what had happened and what she had done. Next day at Guadalajara they were married, and Philip found himself happy. Elizabeth had won her decisive battle and from that time on was ruler of Spain.

In 1715 she became the mother of a daughter, Maria Anna, in 1716 of a son, Charles, and in 1720 of another son, Philip. The crown of Spain would go to Luis, Philip's eldest son by Maria Gabriella, and in case of his death to his brother Ferdinand. Elizabeth was naturally concerned for the future of her own sons. She was the heiress of the Duchy of Parma, and the next-of-kin to the childless Grand Duke of Tuscany. These Duchies, therefore, would in due time become the inheritance of her son Charles. If Philip V should die before her she would find herself in a situation like that of her aunt at Pau, but if her own son were an independent prince in Italy there would be a court to which she could retire with dignity. Philip's interest in Italy was not less than Elizabeth's. He thought he had been wrongly deprived of Naples and Sicily, which had been Spanish since the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as of Milan, which had been Spanish since the time of Charles V. He meant to recover both at the first opportunity. If their reunion to the Crown of Spain would disturb the balance of power they might be given to one of Elizabeth's sons, who would not inherit the Spanish Crown. Thus the aim of Elizabeth was consistent with that of her husband, and the wishes of each of them strengthened those of the other.

The history of Europe for the next thirty years is largely that of Elizabeth's efforts to establish her sons as sovereigns in Italy, efforts resolutely carried on through all the kaleidoscopic changes in the relations between the Powers and ultimately crowned with success.

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iii. *Spanish Attempts upon Italy*

THE peace of Europe is the equilibrium between a number of forces. Any movement tending to a change in the balance produces a redistribution with a view to preserving the equipoise. Elizabeth therefore had always to reckon with the European system. If the Emperor was her chief antagonist, the Duke of Savoy, King of Sicily, was an important factor in all that concerned Italy, and any change of moment was sure to affect the policy of France and of England. It will not be necessary for our purpose to follow in great detail the diplomacy of the period between 1714 and 1740. It will perhaps suffice to disentangle the main impulses by which at each crisis the action of the chief Powers was determined.

In England, while the commercial and colonial interest was never dormant, the dominant motives of George I were security against the claims of the Pretender and consideration for his own interests as Elector of Hanover.

The main current of French policy had long flowed in the direction, given to it by Richelieu and Louis XIV, of expansion at the expense of the House of Habsburg. But after the death of Louis XIV and the accession of his great grandson, a child five years old, hardly expected to live, the chief preoccupation of the Regent Orleans and of the Duke of Bourbon, who succeeded him as Prime Minister, was to find security against the design of Philip V to obtain the Regency in France and in case of the death of Louis to succeed to the Crown. The English fear of the Pretender, and the French fear of Philip, brought the two countries into a political partnership with which Holland, estranged from the Emperor by his dislike of the Barrier Treaty, was associated.

By this combination Elizabeth was thwarted in her first venture, begun under the guidance of Alberoni. This clever minister had worked wonders in restoring the prosperity of Spain, in improving the army and strengthening the navy. A rash act of Charles VI, the arrest on

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Austrian territory of the Spanish Inquisitor General on a charge of treason against Charles as King of Spain, caused an explosion of anger at Madrid which precipitated the action for which Alberoni was preparing. The Austrian army under Prince Eugène was engaged in Turkey, and it was therefore easy for a Spanish expedition to occupy Sardinia; but George I persuaded the Regent to join him in the proposal to bring about a peace between the Emperor and Spain by the exchange of Sardinia to be given to the Duke of Savoy, for Sicily to be restored to the Emperor, while the succession to the Duchies of Parma and Tuscany was to be assured to Elizabeth's eldest son, Don Carlos.

The Emperor agreed to this arrangement and joined the combination of England, France, and Holland. Eugene dictated to the Turks the peace of Passarowitz, setting at liberty Austrian troops which recovered Sicily when the English had destroyed the Spanish fleet. Spain had to accept the terms of the Quadruple Alliance, and the Duke of Savoy reluctantly became King of Sardinia. The Emperor insisted that Don Carlos, when the time should come for him to succeed, should hold his Duchies as fiefs of the Empire. Elizabeth Farnese, indignant at this suggestion, turned towards the Regent Orleans and the Courts of France and Spain were brought together by the marriage of the Regent's daughter to Philip's eldest son, Don Luis, and the betrothal of the boy Louis XV to the Spanish Infanta, who was sent to the French Court to be brought up. Two years later came the death of the Regent, Philip's abdication, the short reign and sudden death of Luis and Philip's resumption of the crown. Bourbon, the Regent's successor, when in 1724 he determined to marry Louis XV to Maria Leszczynska, sent back the Infanta to Madrid. This was an affront which drove Spain into the arms of Austria.

Charles VI was at this time bent upon restoring his finances and the prosperity of the Austrian Netherlands by means of his Ostend Company, an enterprise of which English, French, and Dutch were equally jealous. He was also anxious to secure the succession of his daughter. He

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encouraged the overtures of Ripperda on behalf of Elizabeth Farnese, whose object was to obtain the hand of Maria Theresa for Don Carlos. To this end Elizabeth was willing to recognize the Pragmatic Sanction and to support the Ostend Company. In return Charles was willing to recognize Philip as King of Spain and to help him to recover Gibraltar. He agreed to the marriage of two of his daughters to Elizabeth's two sons and also promised that Maria Theresa should be married to Don Carlos, if he himself should die before she reached marriageable age. The marriage clauses were contained in a secret treaty, but the gist of the agreements became known to the western Powers, who were determined to allow neither the continuance of the Ostend Company nor a marriage which involved the future union of the Habsburgs with the Spanish Bourbons. Spanish troops laid siege to Gibraltar, British ships stopped the trade with South America, and Europe was covered with a network of alliances to resist the Austro-Spanish designs and of counter-alliances to support them. Charles, however, shrank from a European war, especially as the promised Spanish subsidies proved less liberal than he expected, and Elizabeth eventually discovered that he had no intention while he lived of marrying his eldest daughter to Don Carlos. In the end Walpole, by the bait of a British recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction, drew the Emperor out of his Spanish alliance; and Elizabeth had to be content with the establishment in 1732 of Don Carlos as Duke of Parma, and the recognition of his right to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany on the death of the reigning Grand Duke.

In 1733 the death of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, occasioned a new crisis. Louis XV, though he took little interest in the affairs of France, which he left entirely to Cardinal Fleury, had a very strong sense of his position as head of the House of Bourbon. His courtiers and generals were anxious, after a long period of peace, for a revival of the self-assertive policy of Louis XIV, and the suggestion that he ought to recover the Crown of Poland for his father-in-law, Stanislas

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Leszczynski, could not but appeal to him. Fleury, cautious, relying rather on diplomacy than on war, which he disliked, announced that France would insist on the freedom of the election in Poland and spent much money in buying votes for Stanislas. Chauvelin, his Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, saw the chance to revive Richelieu's schemes for driving the Austrians out of Italy and to establish there the Spanish Bourbons, now, since the birth of the Dauphin, on good terms with France. With a view to an attack on Austria, Fleury negotiated separately with the Courts of Turin and of Madrid.

iv. *Charles Emmanuel and the War of the Polish Succession*

'THE new king of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel III, was as brave and statesmanlike and much more virtuous than his father. Without the genius of Victor Amadeus, he had a sound judgement and a sure tact. He was an accomplished soldier; his policy, at once profound and wise, was based upon straightforwardness.'[1]

His early life had been far from happy. As a child he was weak and sickly, and when grown up was short, slender, and ungainly. His father's favourite was his elder brother Victor, a handsome clever boy, for whom Charles, not being likely to succeed to the throne, was neglected. But Victor died in 1715, when Charles Emmanuel was fourteen, and from that time on, King Victor Amadeus began to interest himself in the education of his second son, now his heir. He treated him with severity untempered by affection. He prohibited literary studies, insisting only on mathematics and the military sciences. His constant severity frightened the boy, who could therefore never love him.

As he grew up, Charles Emmanuel became a good rider and acquired a passion for hunting. His father initiated him by degrees into the business of government, sending him to inspect the fortresses he was building, accompanied

[1] Beaucaire, H. de, *Recueil des Instructions*, &c., vol. i, p. lxxiv.

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by the engineer Bertolo, the Piedmontese Vauban. He instructed him in the machinery of administration and finance, made him attend his discussions with his ministers and then privately explained to him his own views of policy and the reasons why they were never fully divulged to any minister.

In 1722 the King married the Prince to Anna Louisa of Sulzbach, but she died in the same year, and the King then found another bride for his son, Polyxena of Hesse-Rheinfels, to whom the Prince became deeply attached.

It was a hard trial for Charles Emmanuel when in 1730, against his strong remonstrance, his father insisted on abdicating and putting him on the throne. The Prince hardly thought himself capable of governing and was distressed by his father's marriage with the Countess of St. Sebastian, Duchess of Spigno. It was a still harder trial when next year the old King revoked his abdication and wished to resume the throne; but the ministers who had served the father urged the son to keep the post in which he had been placed, and the strongest of them, Ormea, arrested and imprisoned the self-deposed monarch, who died in captivity. The rest of Charles Emmanuel's life was tinged with the bitterness of this tragedy.

Carlo Vincenzo Ferrero, Marquis d'Ormea had been the chief minister of Victor Amadeus, and upon his advice Charles Emmanuel also relied.

Through Ormea the King conducted all his negotiations, keeping the decisions always in his own hands, and under the wise advice of that statesman he gradually acquired the self-confidence of which his father's harshness had postponed the development.

Ormea was the impersonation of the policy of the House of Savoy, and of the tradition of Emmanuel Philibert to lean upon France in presence of a preponderant Austria and upon Austria against an overbearing France. Since 1714 Austria had been all-powerful in Italy. With the help of France, and still more with that of Spain as well, the domination of Austria might be moderated and the great aim of Savoy, the acquisition of Milan, attained.

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Ormea negotiated with Chauvelin the Treaty of Turin (26 September 1733), by which, in case of a war conducted in common against Austria by France and Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel in the ensuing peace was to have the Duchy of Milan, and in case the Duchy of Mantua should also be conquered should receive that Duchy too, in exchange for Savoy to be ceded to France. Charles Emmanuel was to have the supreme command of both armies. Fleury undertook to obtain the adherence of the Spanish Court to the terms of this treaty.

Fleury, however, did not keep his word. Elizabeth Farnese wanted Milan for her son and would not agree that it should go to Charles Emmanuel, so Fleury within a month negotiated with Spain the Treaty of the Escurial, 25 October 1733, by which he promised to Elizabeth Farnese all that she claimed in Italy, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Duchies of Mantua, Parma, and Piacenza, and by implication, as part of what she claimed, the Duchy of Milan.

The Russian candidate for the crown of Poland, Augustus, Elector of Saxony, son of the late King, offered to recognize the Pragmatic Sanction if the Emperor Charles would support his candidature. The Emperor agreed to this, and in spite of Fleury's declaration, assembled an army near the Polish frontier, thereby denuding Italy of troops. The election of Stanislas, the Russian invasion of Poland, the establishment of Augustus, the siege of Danzig and the escape of Stanislas left Fleury undisturbed. He moved to the Rhine an army which sufficed to occupy the Austrian army without decisive results, while Charles Emmanuel with his own and a French army occupied the Duchy of Milan, and a Spanish army, landed in Tuscany, overran the Two Sicilies, where Don Carlos was established as King. Charles Emmanuel set up his administration in the Duchy of Milan. In 1734 the Austrian Army, reinforced, attempted to recover the Milanese, but was defeated at Parma and also at Guastalla, a victory which established Charles Emmanuel's reputation as a general.

By this time Charles Emmanuel had discovered the terms

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of the Treaty of the Escurial and the duplicity of Fleury. He had no intention of conquering Mantua for a Spanish Prince and the operations were, therefore, so conducted that the siege of Mantua, though begun, was not carried on in earnest, and the place was not taken.

Meanwhile the Emperor negotiated separately with each of the Allies, and to Elizabeth offered the hand of Maria Theresa for Don Carlos. But the young Archduchess, in love with Francis of Lorraine, flatly refused the proposed match. Fleury, who disliked the war, secretly proposed to the Emperor to make peace on terms which eventually took the following shape: France to recognize the Pragmatic Sanction, the Duchy of Lorraine to be given to Stanislas Leszczynski for his life, and on his death to pass to France; Duke Francis to receive instead the Grand Duchy of Tuscany; Don Carlos to be recognized as King of the Two Sicilies with the Presidii; Austria to receive Parma and Piacenza and to recover the Duchy of Milan, but to cede to Charles Emmanuel the districts of Novara and Tortona and those fiefs of the Langhe which Victor Amadeus had asked for in 1703. Fleury had suggested that Sardinia should guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction, but this guarantee Charles Emmanuel refused to give.

Francis of Lorraine was much distressed by the proposal that he should abandon his native Duchy, the home of a long line of ancestors, for Tuscany, a foreign country where he was a stranger. But his hoped-for bride was the greatest heiress in the world. Bartenstein, the Emperor's Secretary of State, presented him a blunt ultimatum in the words, 'No abdication, no Archduchess'. The Duke accepted the exchange and the Emperor then agreed to the betrothal of the young couple, who were married on 12 February 1736.

In 1737 the old Grand Duke of Tuscany died and Francis took possession of the Grand Duchy.

Charles Emmanuel in this war had learned to his cost that he could not rely on the good faith of Fleury, nor even on the written word of Louis XV, and also that his policy aiming at the acquisition of the Duchy of Milan would have a determined opponent in Elizabeth Farnese.

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He had become a widower during the war and in 1737 married Elizabeth Theresa, sister of Francis of Lorraine.

Elizabeth Farnese was by no means satisfied with the acquisition of a kingdom for Don Carlos. She was very angry with Fleury for allowing Austria to recover Parma, Piacenza, and Tuscany, her own inheritance which she meant to give to Don Philip. She was appeased when Fleury arranged the marriage of Don Philip with Maria Louise, eldest daughter of Louis XV, which took place in 1739, and the betrothal of the Dauphin to her daughter the Infanta Maria Theresa.

In guaranteeing the Pragmatic Sanction Fleury had broken faith with the Elector of Bavaria, to whom by a series of treaties France had pledged herself to support his candidature for the Imperial Crown and his claim to the Kingdom of Bohemia and other Austrian territories. These promises were renewed in 1738, the year in which the treaties concluding the War of the Polish Succession were finally settled.

The treaty of the Escurial, the First Family Compact, was to unite the policies of France and Spain not only in regard to Italy, but also in view of the commercial and colonial rivalry between both countries and Great Britain. Elizabeth Farnese relied on French help in the dispute about British smuggling under cover of the Asiento. This culminated in 1739 in the War of Jenkins' Ear, of which the first action was Vernon's capture of Porto Bello in November of that year.

The Emperor had hardly patched up his peace with France, Spain, and Sardinia, when he became involved in a new war with Turkey. He was bound by treaty to assist Russia with a contingent in case she should be at war with the Sultan. When called upon in 1736 to fulfil this stipulation he rashly decided to employ his whole forces against Turkey. The war was badly conducted; the negotiations mismanaged, and it was ended by the Treaty of Belgrade, in which the conquests of Prince Eugène were surrendered to Turkey. In this unfortunate enterprise the Austrian army was ruined and the treasury exhausted.

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II. CHARLES EMMANUEL DETERMINES HIS POLICY

i. *Maria Theresa and the Powers*

On October 20, 1740, the Emperor Charles VI died. Maria Theresa was accepted without question as his successor in all his dominions, though the Estates of Hungary demanded the recognition of rights and liberties which had not previously been admitted. The late Emperor's defeats in Italy and Turkey had not only demoralized the army but had shaken the faith of his subjects in the stability of the monarchy. It was the universal belief that a weak ruler had been succeeded by a weaker and that effective government could not be expected from a young wife of twenty-three, the mother of three little girls, herself without experience or knowledge of affairs, devoted to a husband of no special ability. There was no man of mark among the ministers, all old men except Bartenstein, who was a good secretary, industrious and loyal, but without much insight. Maria Theresa liked him because he alone had opposed the project of marrying her to Don Carlos.

The young Queen set to work bravely to introduce order into the long-neglected administration, to restore her finances by the reduction of needless expenditure, and to recruit her skeleton battalions. Those who worked with her were surprised by her industry, intelligence, and good sense. Her personal charm and courteous bearing quickly won her the devotion of all who came into contact with her. Her first act was to appoint her husband, the Grand Duke Francis, Co-Regent. She hoped to obtain his election as Emperor.

A disadvantage inseparable from the negotiations of Charles VI for the recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction

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by Foreign Powers was that it implied a doubt as to the validity, and therefore as to the certainty, of the succession. Accordingly the news of the Emperor's death raised in every Court the question of the policy to be adopted.

All important was the attitude of France, for though the commanding superiority over the whole continent which Louis XIV had so long maintained had been lost, France was still the strongest Power in Europe. The judgement of Louis XV when he exercised it was usually that of common sense. On hearing the news of the Emperor's death he said that at this juncture he would not meddle and would keep his hands in his pockets unless they wished to elect a Protestant. But he had always been only too glad to leave the management of affairs to Fleury and to spend his own time in hunting or in the company of one of the sisters De Nesle, of whom, the second, Pauline, Marquise de Ventimille, was at this time his favourite. In fact, Fleury was the absolute master of France, and the words of Louis, at any rate in regard to public affairs, expressed only the thoughts of Fleury.

There were in France two schools on the subject of her foreign policy. The view prevalent among the courtiers and generals was that the death of the Emperor gave an opportunity to fulfil the ambition of Henry IV, Richelieu, and Louis XIV by the final overthrow of the power of Austria, the division of the Habsburg dominions, and the election of an Emperor under French patronage. The strongest upholder of these ideas was the Comte de Belle Isle, the most brilliant officer of the French army. The other view was that of the ablest and most experienced French diplomatists. They judged that Henry IV, Richelieu, and Louis XIV had not aimed at the destruction of the House of Austria, but at such reduction of its power as would give security to France; that this object had been attained and that France should take no steps which might involve her in a new European war, of which in her domestic condition she could not well sustain the burden. This moderate view commended itself to Fleury, who was confirmed in it when the production at Vienna of the will of the Emperor

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Ferdinand proved the claims of the Elector of Bavaria to the succession to be without foundation.

When the Austrian Ambassador made the official announcement of the Emperor's death, the King, after words of sympathy, said: 'You will assure the Grand Duchess that I shall not fail to keep my engagements.' Fleury wrote to the Austrian Ambassador: 'The King will faithfully maintain all the engagements which he has made with your Court, and you will more and more recognize his good faith.' He wrote in the same sense to the Grand Duke Francis. But Fleury had neither the single eye nor the firmness of purpose which mark the statesman, and allowed himself to be pushed step by step towards the policy of which he dreaded the dangers and divined the disastrous consequences for France.

The death of the Emperor was known at Madrid on the 5th of November, and the news was communicated to Elizabeth Farnese by the French Ambassador. She said to him: 'The hour has come for Spain and France to unite more closely than ever in order that they may both profit by so great an event; for the Spaniards to go into Italy without delay and for the French to seize the Netherlands.' On the same day a King's Messenger left Madrid for Fontainebleau with four letters for Cardinal Fleury. Philip V wrote: 'At this time there is a good opportunity to obtain something for the Infant, Don Philip, and at the same time I beg the King, my nephew, to think of his daughter on this occasion in order that their children may have something to live upon and may not remain Cadets.' Elizabeth Farnese wrote: 'I cannot but recommend to you our interests also on this occasion and beg to remind the King of France of his daughter and his son-in-law.' The Infanta, Marie Louise (not yet quite fourteen years old), wrote: 'Sir, I think you have always been aware of my friendship for you; you even used to flatter me that you returned it, and I hope that has not been diminished by absence. I trust that on this occasion you will be good enough not to forget us, and to remind the King of the only person in the world who, if she may venture to say so,

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loves him most tenderly. Since it is you, Sir, who contributed to my marriage, for which I shall have an eternal obligation, I flatter myself that you will be glad to make me completely happy and be persuaded of my gratitude as well as of the friendship for you which I have and shall keep all my life.' The Infant, Don Philip, wrote: 'Sir, I hope everything from you on the present occasion. I hope you will not forget your Princess and I place all my trust in you. I have not dared to trouble the King with a letter, relying on your good offices with him, for which I shall have an eternal obligation.'

A few days later the Spanish Ambassador told Fleury that he ought now to recover for Spain all that she had lost in the war of the Spanish Succession: Milan, Finale, and the Netherlands as well as the patrimony of Queen Elizabeth, Parma, Piacenza, and Tuscany. Shortly afterwards Fleury, in reply, told the Ambassador that France would support the candidature of the Elector of Bavaria for the Imperial Crown. As regards the rights of Spain in Italy he said: 'You renounced them in 1736 and in 1739 and we have guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction. Are you going to make peace with the English upon their conditions? Are you going to throw an army into Italy at the risk of seeing all the world against you? Wait four months, the situation will be clearer.'

On December 9 instructions were sent from Madrid to the Spanish Ambassador at Versailles. He was 'to tell the Cardinal that we can without difficulty at once transport to Italy 40,000 men who will join the 10,000 or 12,000 of the King of Naples. If Fleury wishes to negotiate you will let him know the minimum of the claims on which we shall insist; we shall consent to Tuscany being ceded to Prince Charles of Lorraine on condition that the Infant Don Philip be given all the Milanese with Parma, Piacenza, and Mantua.'

On the 24th of November Fleury wrote to Philip V:

'Your Majesties may rest assured that the King, Their nephew, would not have waited for the letters of the 5th inst., with which They have honoured me, to endeavour to obtain for

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the Infant Don Philip some portion of the succession of the Emperor, if there had been any probability of success at the present moment. I have thought it right to explain to Your Majesties in a separate memoir, the actual situation of all Europe in order that They may judge for Themselves of the obstacles in the way of the success of Their views, views which we have as much at heart as Your Majesties. . . . If the pretensions of the Elector of Bavaria had had any foundation we should have supported them and might have found in the dismemberment of the Emperor's inheritance some opportunity of profiting in favour of the Infant. But Your Majesties will have learned from what has passed at Vienna that it is clear that the House of Bavaria has no right to the Austrian Succession. We have, therefore, no resource but in the election of an Emperor by which the Empire may be divided and it may be possible to negotiate in favour of the Infant with the candidate elected.

Everything will depend on the King of Prussia, the only one who can thwart the Grand Duke. If he will act in concert with us, we may hope for some success, and I await his reply to my answer to his request for my opinion on the situation arising out of the Emperor's death. . . . Our hands are tied as to the Pragmatic Sanction, and even if they were not we might well have been forced to recognize it to avoid a general war, which would be no less dangerous to Spain than to us. . . .

What touches us still more nearly is the terrible misery of our provinces, caused by the famine of wheat and grain. . . . Your Majesties will judge whether we are in a condition to sustain a general war against all Europe. . . .'

The important passage of the Memoir was:

'Their Catholic Majesties cannot but be aware that the King of Sardinia's jealousy of the union of the two branches of Bourbon is so great that he would consent to join with the Court of Vienna rather than suffer the Court of Spain to increase its power in Italy.'

It is characteristic of Fleury that his choice of an ambassador to support at Frankfort the candidature of the Elector of Bavaria for the Imperial Crown fell upon the Comte de Belle Isle, the advocate of the war which the Cardinal himself professed to dislike. Belle Isle, the grandson of Fouquet, very rich, and happily married to one of the most charming ladies in France, was a keen student of his profession and the idol of the troops, whose confidence he had won by strict discipline and a sincere interest in their welfare. He was extremely ambitious and was admirably seconded, both in his political and military

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activities, by his younger brother, the Chevalier de Belle Isle, whose ability and zeal were at least equal to his own. At fifty-six Belle Isle retained all the energy and ardour of youth. He pressed upon Fleury the view that it was absurd to back up the Elector's candidature without helping him to the territory which he claimed and without which the Imperial Crown would add nothing to his power.

On the 18th of November George II in his speech from the Throne referred to the death of the Emperor, and announced that his Government would adhere to the engagements he was under to maintain the balance of Power and the liberties of Europe.

Such were the dispositions of the Courts of France, Spain, and Great Britain when they received the news of the invasion of Silesia, on the 16th of December, by Frederick of Prussia. The effect of Frederick's action was to encourage those in France who with Belle Isle wished to revive the aggressive policy of Louis XIV. Before crossing the Austrian frontier Frederick had made overtures to Fleury for an alliance, to which the Cardinal gave a favourable though dilatory reply. Under the influence of Belle Isle, Fleury was changing his policy; he would support the candidature of the Elector of Bavaria for the Imperial Crown and would assist him with an army in the invasion of Bohemia, but he would not declare war against Austria. He would permit a Spanish army to pass through France for the invasion of Italy, but would take no part in military operations there. The Spanish Court must make its own terms with Charles Emmanuel, without whose alliance a Spanish attack on Austria in Italy would be difficult.

Elizabeth Farnese had already ordered the assembly of 40,000 men in Catalonia and had made proposals to the King of Sardinia for an alliance. She also arranged that her son, Don Carlos, King of the Two Sicilies, should co-operate in her attack upon the Austrian dominions in Italy. But Fleury insisted that both Powers should abstain from any attack upon Tuscany, in exchange for which France had obtained Lorraine.

The proposals made by Spain to Charles Emmanuel

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made it necessary for him to decide upon his policy. Nothing could be more difficult. It was clear to him that a great European war was about to begin, that Elizabeth Farnese regarded him as an obstacle to the accomplishment of her designs, and that France would in all probability sooner or later come to her assistance. In a conflict between Bourbon and Habsburg the position of Piedmont made neutrality impossible. He could hardly expect alone to fight against a great Power, still less against France and Spain together if they should co-operate; but whether it would be possible for him to receive substantial assistance from Austria was at least doubtful. For Austria was as much opposed as Spain to his territorial ambitions, and it was hardly likely that, in the known condition of the Austrian army, Maria Theresa, already embarrassed by the effort to resist the attack of Frederick of Prussia, could be an effective ally. The policy of taking a side would avail him nothing if it should prove to be the losing side. He was, however, in a stronger position for negotiations with either France or Austria than that of his father in 1701, because since the Treaty of Utrecht Piedmont had held the keys of all the passes of the western Alps and the system of fortification for their defence was in 1740 within a few months of completion.

The King agreed with Ormea that it would be fatal for Piedmont to acquiesce in the establishment of a second Spanish Infant in Italy; therefore that an alliance with France and Spain must if possible be avoided and must be accepted only as a counsel of despair; that the only Power interested in the preservation of the European equilibrium, and therefore of the small States, was Great Britain; and that it would be wise, while accepting the overtures of each of the Powers, but concluding with none, to communicate frankly and without reserve to the Government of Great Britain both his own views and any negotiations in which he might engage. The policy adopted was to negotiate both with the Bourbon Courts and with Austria in order to sell the alliance of Sardinia to the highest bidder.

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In this way it was hoped to obtain from Austria concessions which would meet the situation; unless this proved impossible no agreement should at any price be made with the Bourbons. The British Government should be kept fully informed throughout the negotiations.

On the death of the Emperor the Duke of Newcastle had informed the Sardinian Minister that England would support the Pragmatic Sanction. He hoped that the King of Sardinia would adopt the same attitude and would make no alliance with the Bourbons. He was informed in reply that Sardinia had not guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, was under no engagement with any of the Powers, and that the King intended to publish the proofs of his rights to the Milanese. The Duke of Newcastle thought that England would support the claims of Piedmont and offered a subsidy and the assistance of a fleet in the Mediterranean. Charles Emmanuel pointed out that to resist a Spanish invasion he would require the help, not only of the fleet, but of troops; that a subsidy was needed, not merely to increase his own army, but to compensate him for the loss of Savoy and Nice, which, in case of war with France, would undoubtedly be occupied by the enemy; and that he should wish for territorial compensation for the risks incurred in the war and for his claims on the Duchy of Milan.

In January 1741 Fleury informed the Court of Madrid that France would not herself take action in Italy; he gave a verbal but not written consent to the march of a Spanish army through French territory, the consent being conditional upon Spain's obtaining the alliance of Charles Emmanuel. He knew that the King of Sardinia would be very difficult to deal with; he advised the Spanish Government to agree to whatever he asked, yet to feel free to 'clip his wings when they should be able to do so'.

In March 1741 the Spanish Ambassador at Turin proposed an offensive and defensive alliance between Spain and Sardinia for the conquest of the Austrian territories in Italy, with the exception of Tuscany. They were to be divided between the Infant Don Philip and Charles

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Emmanuel. Ormea replied that the King would consider the proposal but would wish France to be a party to the alliance. The Spaniard replied that France wished to be neutral in order not to provoke England, already at war with Spain; that Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia were strong enough to overrun Italy as the Austrian forces were occupied elsewhere. He was afraid that if time were lost in negotiations Austria would make overtures to Sardinia. Ormea frankly replied that no doubt the establishment of another Bourbon in Italy would be prejudicial to the King, his master, but that a statesman must sometimes choose the lesser of two evils and that the King would not refuse an alliance which guaranteed him solid advantages. Spain might be sure that Charles Emmanuel would not join with Austria except in return for some substantial concession, which Maria Theresa could hardly make, seeing that by doing so she would herself be partitioning the monarchy for the integrity of which she was fighting.

Fleury, now in the anti-Austrian camp, proposed that the negotiations between Spain and Sardinia should be carried on at Paris, to which Ormea agreed.

The Austrian Ambassador at Turin, Count Schulenburg, had already proposed an alliance for the defence of Italy against the designs of Spain, without specifying any conditions. This was declined, for the Grand Duke Francis had already in January 1741 admitted to the Sardinian Minister at Vienna that Maria Theresa would not be able to maintain herself in Italy without Sardinia's help, and it was therefore evident to Charles Emmanuel that she was trying to obtain that help as cheaply as possible. When it became known that France was assisting Bavaria the Austrian Ambassador made a fresh proposal. In case of war, but only in that case, Charles Emmanuel should receive in return for his alliance the district of Vigevano and whatever rights the Queen possessed over a Mediterranean port, which of course meant Finale. Schulenburg was told that the King would consult the King of England. Ormea in transmitting Schulenburg's proposal to London observed that the cession of Vigevano was a trifle in com-

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parison either with the King's rights to the Milanese or with the sacrifices which a war would require. As for Finale it would be better that Austria and England should negotiate for its cession to him by Genoa in return for corresponding territory elsewhere. In any case any cessions of territory to Sardinia must be immediate and absolute and not conditional upon the outbreak of war; for it was probable that, if it were known that Sardinia was united with Austria, Spain would abandon her designs of aggression in Italy. The British Cabinet approved of this view and, promising its good offices at Vienna, undertook to propose there that the King of Sardinia should receive not only Vigevano but the Pavian territory south of the Po and the County of Anghiera. Charles Emmanuel replied that he was very willing to join with England for the defence of Maria Theresa in opposition to the supremacy of the House of Bourbon. But Maria Theresa's fortunes were at a low ebb, she had few troops in Italy, Spain was threatening, and France was very strong. Only an alliance of the chief Powers could help her. For that purpose Russia should be induced to take her side and Prussia to guarantee her territories except Silesia. England and Holland should join in the war by land and sea. He hoped that all this would be done and meanwhile he would temporize until the conclusion of such a general treaty as should contain the stipulations he desired. He added, under the seal of secrecy, that if Spain should move against Lombardy he was determined to make a provisional military convention with Austria, to resist any Spanish attack on a province on which he had well-founded claims of his own.

ii. *The Spanish Army in Italy. The Convention of Turin*

ELIZABETH FARNESE had no mind to agree to any aggrandizement of Sardinia. She had no patience with Fleury's dilatory negotiations and made up her mind, and

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Philip's, to act on her own account independently of Fleury and without regard to Charles Emmanuel. She was already at war with Great Britain. Fortunately for her the British Government was not directing its forces with vigour or judgement. The passions that led to the conflict had been stimulated by the Opposition for the purpose of driving Walpole from office, and Walpole, in the hope of keeping in power, had reluctantly begun hostilities without declaring war. Only after months of reprisals in which the prizes taken were worth more than the sum in dispute, was war declared, and even then no great preparations were made and no sound plan adopted.

The experience of the war of the Spanish Succession hardly encouraged the idea of landing an army in Spain, but at sea Spain was incomparably inferior in strength. A British Government in earnest would have aimed first at the ruin of the Spanish Navy. In May 1739 Great Britain had 80 ships of the line fit for service, Spain only 40, which were distributed between the ports of Ferrol, Cadiz, and Carthagena. To tell off, against the squadron in each of these ports, a British squadron strong enough to watch the exit and to fight whatever force might come out, would have been to paralyse the Spanish Navy. British territory would have been secure, the destruction of Spanish and the protection of British trade comparatively easy.

Instead of thus gripping the whole Spanish Navy, the British Government dealt only with parts of it and devoted its main effort to enterprises against the Spanish colonies in America and in the West Indies. Vernon's first expedition took Porto Bello (November 1739), but his second failed to take Carthagena (April 1741), and Anson's adventurous voyage could have no great influence on the course of the conflict. The Government's slackness in preparation and its neglect of naval advice brought about in 1741 a situation discreditable to the first maritime Power.

Elizabeth Farnese had assembled in Catalonia an army of 40,000 men under the Duke of Montemar, who eight

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years before had conquered the Kingdom of Naples for Don Carlos. She meant him now to conquer for Don Philip the remaining Austrian possessions in Italy. He was to take his army by sea from Barcelona to Orbetello and, reinforced by the Neapolitan army, to invade Tuscany and Lombardy.

During a war with Great Britain it should have been impossible to move Spanish troops by sea. But the British Government expected Admiral Haddock with 12 ships not only to prevent the transport of the Spanish army from Barcelona but also to protect the island of Minorca, to deal with 17 ships preparing for sea at Cadiz, with 4 or 5 more at Carthagena, and at the same time to keep an eye on 13 French ships at Toulon, which it was anticipated might help the Spaniards. The most important squadron was that in Cadiz, which Haddock was to watch because it might be destined for the West Indies, where its arrival would prove embarrassing. Accordingly, during the summer and autumn of 1741, Haddock kept his squadron west of Gibraltar to be ready to deal with the Cadiz squadron if it should come out.

At Philip V's request, Louis XV ordered the French Admiral de Court, commanding the Toulon squadron, to assist the Spaniards in covering the transport of the army, though not to engage in hostilities against the British unless attacked by them.

Early in October 1641 de Court sailed from Toulon with 11 ships and cruised off Cape de Gata, while the Spanish squadron from Carthagena sailed to Barcelona and convoyed the 220 transports conveying the first instalment of the Spanish army. The convoy sailed from Barcelona on November 4, and though dispersed by a storm eventually landed 13,600 men at Orbetello (20 November). Haddock at Gibraltar heard on November 13 that the Cadiz fleet had put to sea. On November 21 he was joined by the *Marlborough*, a 90-gun ship from England, and as she was in bad condition set to work to repair her. On the night of November 23-4 the Cadiz fleet passed the straits, and on December 2, the *Marl-*

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borough being now ready, Haddock sailed with 13 ships to find the 17 from Cadiz.

On December 6 he sighted them, but they were accompanied by the Toulon squadron of 11 ships, and a council of war decided 'that in view of the enemy's great superiority it would be dangerous to continue the pursuit and that the best course would be to keep to windward of the enemy'. As the French had orders not to fight unless attacked there was no engagement. Haddock sailed to Port Mahon and the combined French and Spanish fleet to Barcelona, whence it convoyed a second instalment of Spanish troops, 11,700 men under the Marquis of Castelar, which sailed on January 13, and in spite of bad weather landed the infantry at Spezzia in Genoese territory by January 31.

On January 27 Haddock at Port Mahon was reinforced by Lestock with seven ships from England. On hearing of this the French Admiral at Spezzia promptly sailed to Toulon, whither Navarro, the Spanish Admiral, followed him. Haddock's ships were under repair and he himself in such broken health that he could decide nothing. At the end of March Lestock took over the command, and at once disposed his fleet, now of 24 ships of the line, to watch Toulon and the coast as far as Antibes, and to be ready to attack the French and Spaniards if they should come out. Fleury would not allow de Court to risk a battle, and Navarro alone could not face the British Fleet. From this time on the British Fleet controlled the situation and the transport of Spanish troops by sea was no longer practicable.

Elizabeth Farnese's action had the effect, which she least intended, of driving together Austria and Sardinia. In his correspondence with Fleury, Ormea had very frankly explained the position and the views of Charles Emmanuel. In a letter dated the 29th of November, 1741, after the arrival in Italy of the first contingent of Spanish troops, he wrote:

'If the rigour of the season, the difficulty of the passages, and the lack of means for an advance detain the Spanish troops beyond the Apennines long enough to give time for the negotia-

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tion, that circumstance will favour its conclusion, and I assure Your Eminence that the King will carry it on with eagerness. . . . But I cannot refrain from telling Your Eminence that if against all expectation Spain should wish to pursue her designs without waiting for the conclusion of the Treaty, and if her troops should advance towards Lombardy, His Majesty is fully determined not to suffer that course and to oppose it by all the means in his power.'

Fleury then asked Charles Emmanuel to say explicitly what were the terms on which he would ally himself with Spain. In reply Charles Emmanuel sent him two alternative schemes for the partition of the Austrian dominions in Italy between himself and Don Philip. According to one of them he was to take the Duchy of Milan north of the Po as far as the Adda, and Don Philip Mantua, Cremona, Parma, and Piacenza. According to the other he was to have the whole Duchy of Milan and the city of Piacenza, and Don Philip Mantua, Parma, and the island of Sardinia. Ormea wrote that by either scheme Charles Emmanuel's share was less than had been promised him in 1733. He added that if the Spaniards marched against Lombardy before the treaty had been signed, Charles Emmanuel would oppose them with all his forces.

Charles Emmanuel's policy had to meet the situation created by the events of 1741, which may be briefly recalled. When the year 1741 began, Maria Theresa was collecting an army to resist Frederick's invasion of Silesia which was almost bare of troops. She had hardly recovered from the birth of her fourth child, her eldest son Joseph (31 March 1741), when she heard of Frederick's defeat of her army at Mollwitz (10 April) and soon after of Admiral Vernon's failure at Carthagena (14 April). In May came the Treaty of Nymphenburg, by which Spain and Bavaria agreed to attack her, and in June the alliance between France and Prussia. In July two French armies crossed the Rhine. The first, under Maillebois, marched to the frontier of Hanover and frightened George II, the one ally upon whom Maria Theresa relied, into agreeing to the neutrality of his Electorate. Of the second, one half marched to invade Bohemia, the other half to join the

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Bavarian army in the invasion of Austria. The Elector of Bavaria took Linz on the 10th of September, and as there was no force available for the protection of Vienna, Maria Theresa had to take refuge at Pressburg, where the malcontent Hungarians were the despair of her advisers. On the brink of ruin the brave Queen never lost heart. By judicious concessions she gained the goodwill of the Hungarians and the promise of troops. Her queenly bearing at the coronation ceremonies made so great an impression that it has become legendary, and the reports from Pressburg gave her, in England, a popularity which was not without effect on British policy. By English advice and mediation she negotiated with Frederick the convention of Klein-Schnellendorf (9 October 1741), by which, in return for the cession of Silesia, Frederick agreed to cease hostilities against Austria. The Elector of Bavaria, instead of pushing on to Vienna, had crossed the Danube to join that portion of the French army which was in Bohemia, and in November the French took Prague.

Meantime, Maria Theresa had brought from Italy a reinforcement of 13,600 men to the army with which Khevenhuller recovered Linz (January 1742), invaded Bavaria, and occupied Munich on the very day when the Elector was crowned Emperor as Charles VII at Frankfort. But while Khevenhuller was driving the Bavarians before him, Frederick, in spite of the convention of Klein-Schnellendorf, renewed hostilities, invaded Moravia, and took the fortress of Olmütz (26 December 1741). Maria Theresa had withdrawn from Italy so many troops that her Commander-in-Chief there, Field-Marshal Count Abensburg-Traun, could hardly put 10,000 men in the field.

Charles Emmanuel thoroughly understood the position. He wanted to obtain the extension of territory which he had defined in his communications with the British Government. He was quite determined to help Maria Theresa against Spain, and hoped that in return for his help she would agree to cede the territories he desired. But he realized that security was vital, and extension of territory, though desirable, was not. He thought that

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Maria Theresa would agree to his proposals rather than allow him to join her enemies, and he therefore continued his negotiations with the Bourbon Courts, and took care she should know he was doing so. Maria Theresa knew that Charles Emmanuel's interest was to defend himself against Spain, and that for that purpose her co-operation was necessary to him.

The strategical key of the situation lay in the Duchy of Modena, between the Austrian Duchies and the Papal territory of Bologna, Ferrara, and Rimini. Once in possession of Modena, the Spaniards would have a central position from which to attack the Austrians along either bank of the Po. If the Austrians could secure Modena they would have the best position for resisting a Spanish advance in either direction. If the Spaniards were to be kept out of Lombardy, they must not be allowed to establish themselves at Modena. This was equally vital to Sardinia and to Austria. Accordingly Ormea drafted a convention which was signed at Turin, 1 February 1742, and ratified by Maria Theresa, 10 February 1742.

By this convention, Maria Theresa undertook to collect her forces to march against the Spaniards, and in particular to cover the State of Modena and Mirandola, 'the advanced bulwark of her possessions in Italy'. The King of Sardinia undertook to have a large force ready at Pavia, Piacenza, and Parma, into which fortresses the Austrians were to admit them, for the reinforcement of Traun, with whom he was to arrange the operations. It was agreed that the convention should not prejudice the claims or rights of either party to the Duchy of Milan and Charles Emmanuel undertook not to raise his claims except after giving Maria Theresa a month's notice. He reserved his right, with such notice, to raise them whenever he should think fit, and to make any alliance he pleased for the purpose of asserting them.

The convention was communicated both to the British and French Governments. Almost at the same time the resignation of Walpole removed the chief obstacle to the more active intervention of Great Britain in continental

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affairs, and the new Government promised the King of Sardinia a subsidy of £200,000 and the assistance of the British Fleet.

The Convention of Turin was not the treaty for which Charles Emmanuel wished. It secured him the assistance of the weak Austrian forces in Italy in resisting the Bourbon invasion of the territories in the valley of the Po. But it gave him no prospect of the extension of his own dominions. He was giving to Austria assistance which was vital to her, but he had no intention of rendering this service for nothing, and therefore the convention left him free to continue his negotiations with the Bourbon Courts, and, if they should make it worth his while, to come to terms with them and to change sides. This was the lever by which he hoped to move the Austrian Court, hitherto always opposed to the expansion of Piedmont.

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III. THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR IN ITALY

i. *Modena and Mirandola. Martin at Naples*

In October 1741, when the Duke of Montemar left Madrid to take command of the Spanish army at Barcelona, his plan, which had the King's approval, was to land in the Presidii with 40,000 men and then, reinforced by 10,000 Neapolitan troops, to invade Tuscany and the Austrian Duchies, from which the larger half of the Austrian forces had been withdrawn across the Alps. But Fleury was determined that the neutrality of Tuscany should be respected. Accordingly on reaching Barcelona, Montemar received fresh instructions drafted by a new Minister, Campillo. As soon as the first instalment of his army was landed in Italy, he was to pick up the Neapolitan contingent and march into Lombardy, making up by speed for what he lacked in numbers. It was thought at Madrid that swift action would induce the King of Sardinia to take the Spanish side. Montemar regarded Campillo as his personal enemy and resented the new instructions, which he considered impracticable. He submitted to the King his objections to this plan, and a statement showing the inadequacy of his supplies and even of the money he had for obtaining them. His objections were overruled and Campillo obtained for Don Juan, Count de Gages, a commission, apparently secret, to command the army in case of Montemar's ill health or failure to fulfil the King's wishes.

Montemar did not accompany the first convoy from Barcelona, but travelled by land to Antibes, and thence by sea to Genoa, this being the usual way of travelling to

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Central Italy, to illustrate the movements of Spaniards and Austrians in the Peninsula.

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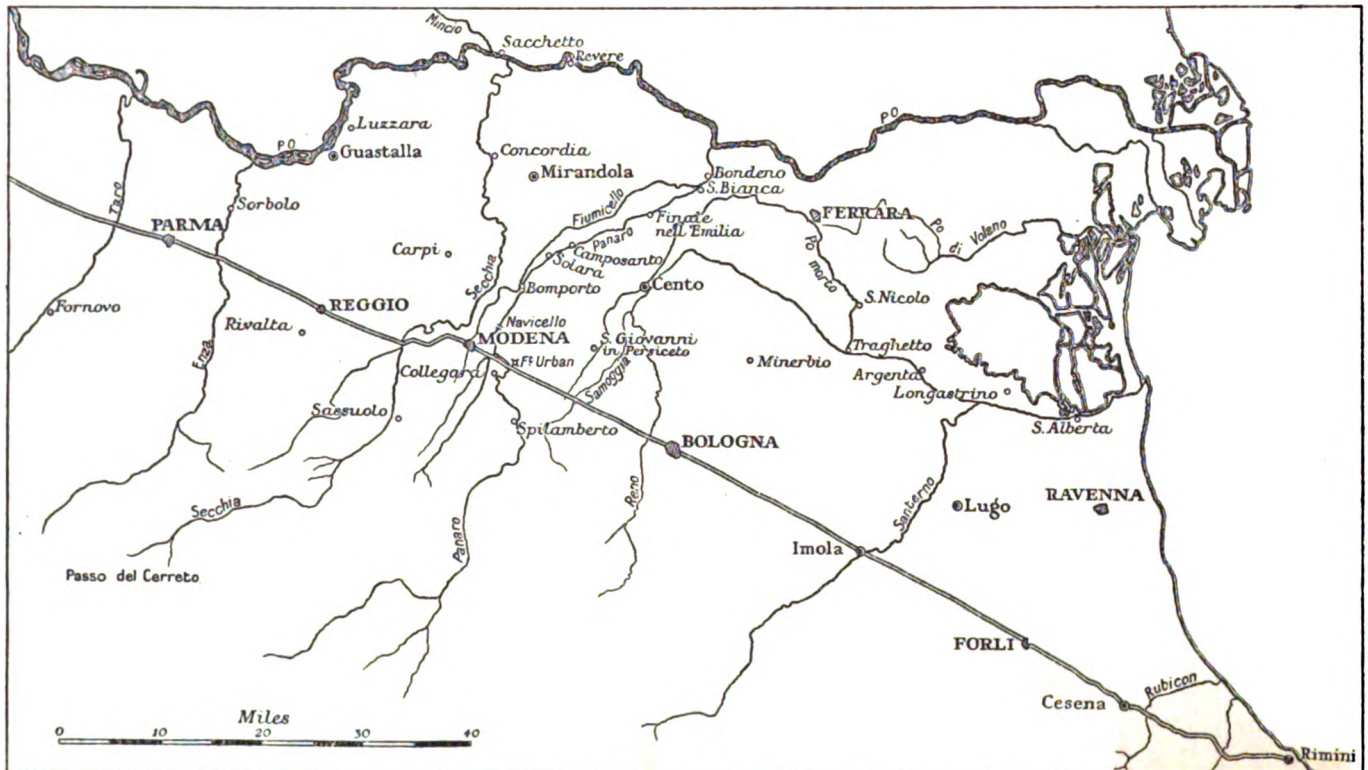
Genoa as there was no carriage road, and the mule track was difficult if not dangerous for horses.

At Genoa Montemar learned that the transports carrying his cavalry were waiting for fair weather in harbours between Genoa and Spezia, where he kept them for some weeks before permitting the cavalry to land. The consequences to the condition of the horses can be imagined. When he reached Orbetello he found his infantry short of provisions and of money to buy them. There was much sickness and desertion was rife. He had to borrow money from Cardinal Aquaviva in order to supply the most pressing needs. The Neapolitan contingent under the Duke of Castropignano had been waiting since the middle of November at Spoleto. Orders to push on kept coming from Madrid, and Montemar at last decided, as Tuscany was closed to him by Fleury's decision to respect the neutrality of the Duchy in exchange for which France held Lorraine, to march across the Apennines to Ancona, and thence to move upon Lombardy through Bologna. This involved the violation of the Pope's neutrality. The troops started out on the 8th of January, 1742, and suffered a good deal from the wintry weather in the Apennines. By the middle of March Montemar had his troops quartered along the Adriatic coast, the Spaniards from Rimini to Pesaro, and the Neapolitans from Pesaro to Ancona.

The troops of the second convoy under Montemar's son-in-law, the Marquis of Castelar, reached Spezia at the end of January. They were landed and encamped near Sarzana with Montemar's cavalry. Montemar ordered them to march to Rimini through neutral Tuscany, so Castelar had to negotiate at Florence for permission to go that way. This was granted and Castelar marched up the valley of the Arno to Prato, thence across the Apennines to Forli and so to Rimini, which was reached in the last week of March. It was nearly the end of April before the army, at length assembled at Rimini, was equipped with its artillery, ammunition, and supplies.

While Montemar had thus with difficulty brought two-thirds of his own original force, together with the Nea-

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Modena and Emilia : Campaigns of Montemar and de Gages.

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politans, to the starting-point of his intended campaign, the situation had been changed by the convention between Austria and Sardinia. It was one thing to attack with a much superior force a weak Austrian army such as Montemar had defeated in 1734: a very different thing to face an Austrian force under a good general like Traun, reinforced by the first-rate Sardinian army under Charles Emmanuel. Montemar thought it prudent to wait for the third instalment of his army. But the British fleet now controlled the sea, and the troops left at Barcelona could not be brought by sea to Italy. So the Spanish Court again applied to Fleury for permission for these troops to march through France. This was granted, and the troops, under the Count de Glimes, were ordered to march to Antibes, whence it was thought that they might be taken by sea along the coast to Genoa, or if not, might be able to march through Piedmont. But by either plan the movement would take a long time and could be no immediate help to Montemar.

Maria Theresa had no sooner ratified the Convention of Turin than she ordered Traun with his whole force to attack Montemar before he could be joined by Castelar. But the government of Milan was always in financial difficulties and Traun had not the money needed for prompt mobilization. However, by the beginning of March, after he had agreed with Charles Emmanuel about the plan of campaign, he was able to assemble his troops at Revere on the Po, whence he threw a bridge across the river and marched into the Duchy of Modena, quartering his troops between Carpi and Mirandola. The Duke of Modena, who professed a benevolent neutrality, had agreed to furnish supplies but not to let the Austrians occupy a fortress, as he said he had refused to allow the Spaniards that privilege.

As soon as Traun moved, Charles Emmanuel sent forward 15,000 infantry and 3,200 cavalry to be quartered in the Austrian fortresses of Pavia, Piacenza, and Parma, where they would be ready to support Traun. Charles Emmanuel, regarding himself as the champion of Italy, was

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anxious for the alliance of the other Italian States or at least not to do anything to drive them into the arms of Spain. Venice remained neutral, though allowing the passage of Austrian troops through her territory. The Pope could only protest to both sides against the invasion of his territory, and his subjects suffered from the lax discipline of the Spanish army. At a conference at Piacenza, on March 23, Traun urged upon Charles Emmanuel Maria Theresa's plan of an immediate offensive. But Charles Emmanuel would not agree to advance beyond the Panaro, into the Pope's territory, except in case Montemar should march to Ferrara, in which case an advance through Bologna would threaten his retreat. The Duke of Modena, Francis III of Este, was married to a daughter of the Regent Orleans and believed to favour the Bourbon cause. His army of 8,000 men was by no means negligible. He was in fact negotiating at Madrid, and the Spanish Court was offering him a subsidy and the promise of Guastalla with all the land between his own frontier and the Po, as well as the command of the Spanish army, if he would join that army with 5,000 men, whom he was mobilizing at the expense of Spain. An alliance on these terms was signed at Aranjuez on April 30, the day on which Charles Emmanuel arrived at Parma and was waited upon by the Duke's Minister, with assurances of goodwill, with authority to contradict the report that the Duke was negotiating with Spain, and with proposals for the recognition of his neutrality. Charles Emmanuel declined to discuss neutrality and advanced his cavalry to the River Enza, the boundary between Parma and Modena. Thereupon the Duke left his residence at Rivalta near Reggio and went to Sassuolo near Modena, at the same time ordering his troops to be concentrated at his two fortresses of Modena and Mirandola, evidently for the purpose of holding them until the arrival of the Spanish army. This movement confirmed the news that reached Parma from Vienna of the Duke's treaty with Spain. On the 6th of May, Ormea had an interview with the Duke and replied to his denial of an agreement with Spain by

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producing conclusive evidence of the Treaty. The Duke then admitted it, but declared that he would not ratify it. After that Charles Emmanuel had no grounds for further hesitation. He crossed the Enza (May 10) and advanced his army to the Panaro (May 18).

Montemar had not started from Rimini until April 20 and on April 29 reached Forli, where he waited for the third instalment of his army from Barcelona, but on May 2 received from his Court orders to push on without it, as it had been sent to Antibes. On May 9 a fresh order from the Court at length induced him to renew his advance. He passed Bologna on the 17th of May and encamped on the 20th at the Samoggia. By this time Charles Emmanuel's troops were holding all the passages of the Panaro—a stream 6 feet deep and 40 yards wide—the ford at Spilamberto, the bridge of boats on the Bologna high road, the wooden bridge at Navicello, the stone bridge at Finale, and the ferries at Bomporto and Bondeno. The Sardinian army was encamped at Collegara, the Austrian on the high road between Modena and the Panaro.

On May 23 Charles Emmanuel notified the Duke of Modena that unless within 14 days he accepted the alliance of Austria and Sardinia those Powers would treat him as an enemy. On May 29, the day on which both armies received the news of the defeat of the Austrians on May 27 at Czaslau by Frederick, Montemar advanced in three columns to Fort Urban (garrisoned by Papal troops) and encamped with the centre column on the high road and the flank columns on each side of it. But having thus advanced to the Panaro, he halted and ventured nothing more.

In the night of June 5-6, the Duke of Modena left Sassuolo and crossed into Venetian territory. Thereupon Charles Emmanuel occupied the town of Modena, and besieged the citadel, which was, however, bravely defended by its commandant Cavelliere de Negro, a Genoese. Montemar, upon renewed orders from Madrid to take the offensive, called a council of war of 24 Spanish and 10 Neapolitan general officers, which decided that the

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Austro-Sardinian army of superior force in its position behind the Panaro was too strong to be attacked (June 9). At this time the actual strength of the Spanish Neapolitan army was 25,000 infantry and 3,200 cavalry, that of the Austro-Sardinian army 25,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry.

Montemar determined to assist de Negro by a diversion. He would move to the lower Panaro and seize Mirandola in order to draw off Charles Emmanuel from Modena. He first moved his magazines to Ferrara, and then, on June 18, marched from Fort Urban to San Giovanni, and on the 20th to Cento. On the 25th he sent on de Gages with the advance guard to Bondeno with orders to throw bridges over the Panaro at Santa Bianca, and on the 26th followed with the army to Bondeno, and fortified a bridge-head on the left bank at Santa Bianca.

These movements, however, did not disturb Charles Emmanuel, who had reinforced his army by two more battalions, while Traun had been joined by 4,800 Slavonians and Croats. The King merely sent a body of cavalry to watch the crossings of the Panaro and moved his army on the Panaro a little farther to its left. He more vigorously bombarded the citadel of Modena, and on June 29 de Negro surrendered, and his garrison of 3,000 men became prisoners of war. De Negro informed Charles Emmanuel that his troops had been in the pay of Spain, thereby fully justifying the action taken by the Allies against the Duke of Modena.

After the surrender of Modena there was a short pause in the operations. Maria Theresa had agreed to the preliminary treaty of Breslau with Frederick II (June 11) and the army that had been opposing him could now act against the French in Bohemia. Her position in Germany thus improved, she thought she might now undertake the reconquest of Naples and Sicily, which her father had lost eight years before. The British Government, after the resignation of Walpole, in February 1742, was ready to take a more active part in the continental war, and had sent out Admiral Mathews to command in

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the Mediterranean, with instructions to act vigorously against both the Spanish and French fleets, and also against the Kingdom of Naples. Mathews had sent into the Adriatic three ships which prevented the transport of Montemar's heavy artillery from Brindisi to Rimini and captured some of his stores. Montemar's army had been much weakened by sickness and desertion. He dared not risk a battle, for defeat would probably mean the complete ruin of his army.

Charles Emmanuel doubted whether he should help to conquer Naples for Maria Theresa, who would not cede to him an inch of Lombardy, and Traun was not anxious to join him in attacking Montemar at Bondeno. At last they agreed to besiege Mirandola and marched from Modena in three days (July 9–12) to Concordia, where they encamped. Troops were told off for the investment and bombardment of Mirandola, covered by Count Aspremont, who, with the cavalry posted at Finale, watched Montemar's bridge-head at Santa Bianca. Mirandola surrendered on July 22. Montemar heard of the surrender next day and on July 24 retreated to Ferrara, whence he sent off some of his sick and some of his guns by the Po di Volano to Porto Volano, and then by sea to Rimini, where they were landed. On the 26th he set off from Ferrara in two columns, the cavalry going by Traghetto and Lugo, the infantry behind the Po Morto, through San Nicolo, Argento, Longastrino, and San Alberto, to Ravenna (July 30) and Rimini (August 3).

The Austro-Sardinian army set off on July 24 to intercept Montemar. But difficulties of transport impeded the Austrians. The Panaro was reached at Solara and Campo Santo on the 25th. Charles Emmanuel then learned that the Spaniards had passed through Ferrara. He pushed on with his own troops towards the Bologna–Rimini road and reached Imola on July 30, the day that Montemar reached Ravenna. There was now no chance of intercepting Montemar, so Charles Emmanuel waited for the Austrians till August 3, and on the 7th of August the whole army reached Cesena and took position

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on the Rubicon just beyond that town. Montemar had received a report that Austrian troops from Trieste were to be landed on the coast in his rear. The appearance of English and Austrian men-of-war off Rimini seemed to confirm the report and induced him to continue his retreat to Fano and across the Apennines. By the 22nd of August the Neapolitans reached Spoleto and the Spaniards Foligno. There the army halted, Montemar considering it well placed for the defence of the Kingdom of Naples.

The Austro-Sardinian advance ended at Pesaro, for on reaching that place Charles Emmanuel learned that the Spanish army under de Glimes had marched northward from Provence, apparently in order to invade Piedmont.

Maria Theresa, now that she had made her peace with Prussia and that the Spanish army was retreating, was eager to follow it up and to recover the Kingdom of Naples. She counted for that purpose on the help of Charles Emmanuel, who would be compensated for the exertions of his army by recovering the island of Sicily, which had been his father's. Both Traun and the newly appointed Austrian Ambassador, Kaunitz, urged the King to join in the enterprise against Naples. Charles Emmanuel told them frankly that he was under no obligation to do so, he had no more reason to wish for an Austrian than for a Bourbon supremacy in Italy; he did not want Sicily; the territory he wished to obtain was in Lombardy on his own borders. In any case, it was imperative for him to attend to the defence of his own dominions.

This decision was a great disappointmeut to Maria Theresa. The Pope was remonstrating with both sides for their infringement of his neutrality and was calling upon both to remove their armies without delay from his territories. Charles Emmanuel did not want to alienate the Pope, and urged compliance with his demands, greatly to Maria Theresa's annoyance. On the 12th of August Charles Emmanuel sent off 6 battalions to Parma, and on the 19th followed with the rest off his army to Bologna. There he left Count Aspremont with 12 battalions and

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4 regiments of cavalry to take winter quarters between Modena and Pavia, with orders to co-operate with Traun in case of a fresh Spanish attack. He himself went on with 13 battalions and 2 cavalry regiments to Piedmont.

Meanwhile Traun was relieved from all immediate apprehension by the action of the British Navy. Admiral Mathews, who was keeping his fleet in Hyères roads to observe the Spanish and French fleets in Toulon, sent off Commodore Martin with five ships and four bomb vessels to Naples with instructions, which had been communicated to Charles Emmanuel and to Traun, to require the King of Naples to withdraw his troops from Montemar's army and to forbear in future from helping the Spaniards in Italy. Unless the King agreed to these demands within half an hour Martin was to 'lay the city in ashes'. Martin appeared off Naples on August 19 and carried out his instructions. The threat of bombardment induced the King to agree unconditionally to Martin's demands and at once to send orders recalling the Duke of Castropignano.

The withdrawal of the Neapolitan troops left Montemar too weak to be dangerous to Traun, who had meantime met the Pope's wishes by retiring behind the Panaro to Bomporto, where in case of need Aspremont's troops could soon be brought up to his support.

Elizabeth Farnese was much annoyed by Montemar's retreat, the reasons for which she could not understand. She sent him orders, which he received at Foligno on September 6, immediately to resume the offensive. She had not yet heard of the withdrawal of the Neapolitan contingent. Two days later came a fresh order recalling both Montemar and Castelar and giving the command of the army to de Gages, who was at once to march to Faenza and thence to invade either Lombardy or Tuscany. De Gages was a Walloon who had risen from the ranks. He was regarded as a foreigner and was therefore disliked by most of the officers, who were Spanish nobles. Yet he was a good soldier and quickly re-established discipline. By an amnesty to deserters he brought back many of them to the ranks, so that by the end of September the strength of his

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force had risen to 12,000 infantry and 1,300 cavalry. He started from Foligno in the middle of September, crossed the Apennines and marched by Rimini to Bologna, where he encamped on the 5th of October.

The two armies watched each other till December, suffering a good deal from exposure during the wet and cold weather. In December both were put into billets for the winter, de Gages keeping the bulk of his infantry at Bologna, Traun placing his Austrian infantry near the Panaro, of which the crossings were watched and guarded, and Aspremont posting eight of his twelve Piedmontese battalions in Modena, Reggio, and Parma, while the other four were quartered in Piacenza and Pavia.

ii. *Don Philip in Provence. Bourcet's Account of the Frontier. The Spaniards occupy Savoy, which Charles Emmanuel recovers but abandons.*

We have seen the conditions in which Elizabeth Farnese went to Spain. It was necessary for her, unless her life was to be one of abject misery, to maintain the ascendancy which she had at once acquired over her husband. Fortunately for her, she had soon grown fond of Philip, while her attraction for him was natural enough, seeing that she had so many queenly graces.

Saint-Simon, who went as Ambassador to Madrid in 1721, when Elizabeth was 28, thus describes his first impressions:

'The Queen shocked me by her face, marked, scarred, much disfigured by small-pox. . . . She was well-built, at that time thin, but her throat and shoulders beautiful, shapely, full and white, as were her arms and hands; a well-set figure, an easy carriage, slender and short waist; she spoke French very well, with a slight Italian accent; the words well-chosen and found without effort; her voice and enunciation most agreeable. A gracious, constant, natural charm, without the slightest affectation, accompanied her conversation, and varied her expression. She united an air of kindness and of politeness, of the precise

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degree appropriate, often amounting to a friendly familiarity, with a dignity and majesty which never left her. From this combination it came about that when one had the honour of seeing her privately, always, be it noted, in the presence of the King, one felt at one's ease, without being able to forget who she was, and one was soon accustomed to her face. . . .'

After a Court Ball Saint Simon wrote that he had never seen a better dancer than the Queen, and very few so good.

Elizabeth's never-ceasing attention to her husband, with whose every whim she cheerfully complied, even to the suppression of her tastes in favour of his, gradually made her presence indispensable to him. He could not bear to be without her for a moment. He would neither see any one without her, nor allow her to see any one without him. Day and night, at work, in audience, in amusements, and in devotion, they never left each other even for an instant, except in those brief formal audiences which etiquette required them to hold separately. Only for a few minutes while she was dressing, and for the weekly half-hour during which, while at Madrid, the King attended the Privy Council, was the Queen out of her husband's sight. He was morose, taciturn, and peevish. He always thought himself ill. Her quick temper was often sorely tried. Yet she bore cheerfully what seemed to others an unendurable slavery, and her conversation was always bright, witty, and sparkling.

In a life like this it was impossible for her, even if she had wished it, to educate herself in regard to any of those matters upon which good government depends. Yet out of the plenitude of her ignorance, and of Philip's, she had to govern Spain.

Elizabeth's readiness to be guided by a wiser head than her own had not been fortunate. Her trust in Alberoni had led to disaster; her confidence in Ripperda had been shattered. No wonder that she came to rely only on herself and to mistrust advisers among whom there was no man of mark. In her position her outlook could not but be restricted and personal; her interest was concentrated upon the advancement of her children. Her ambition for

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Don Carlos was fulfilled when he became King of the Two Sicilies. After that her one aim was to find a kingdom for her second boy. She had at her disposal the resources of Spain so far as they were in the power of the King. She could count also on the support of Louis XV, upon whose feelings for his family she knew how to play.

Don Philip had been married in October 1739 at the age of eighteen to Louis's eldest daughter, Louise Elizabeth, her father's pet, at the time of her marriage a girl of twelve. Philip was his mother's spoilt child. He was obedient, affectionate, and good-tempered, fond of dress and of display, and of the outward shows of soldiering. He had neither ideas nor a will of his own. In mind he never grew up. Even in 1747, when he was twenty-six, and had for six years been nominally Commander-in-Chief of an army in the field, he used to play prisoner's base and blind man's buff and to put out sentries to prevent his being caught in these games by Marshal Belle-Isle.

Elizabeth had made Don Philip Grand Admiral of Spain, an office of which he received the emoluments. When Montemar left Barcelona to command the army destined for Italy, Don Philip wished to go with him. But Elizabeth thought he ought to stay at Madrid for the expected confinement of his young wife. The baby, the Princess Isabel, was born on the 31st of December, 1741. When de Glimes was ordered to march from Barcelona to Antibes with what was left of the army, Elizabeth decided that Philip should accompany him with the title of Commander-in-Chief. Fleury pointed out that a Prince ought not to go on such an uncertain adventure. Louis XV agreed with Fleury. But, as Elizabeth insisted, Louis ordered the Governors of Languedoc and Provence to receive the Infant as a prince of the blood and to arrange for the supply, both of his suite and of his troops—thus laying a heavy burden on Provence, where there was a scarcity of food for the population and where the indiscipline of the Spanish troops caused trouble.

The Infant left Madrid in February and Barcelona in March. He travelled in state, with 24 state coaches, 59

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barouches, 27 wagons, and 462 mules. At the chief towns on his route he was royally entertained. He reached Antibes at the end of April, and during the first days of May the troops came in by detachments, the total force being 13,700 foot and 3,800 horse.

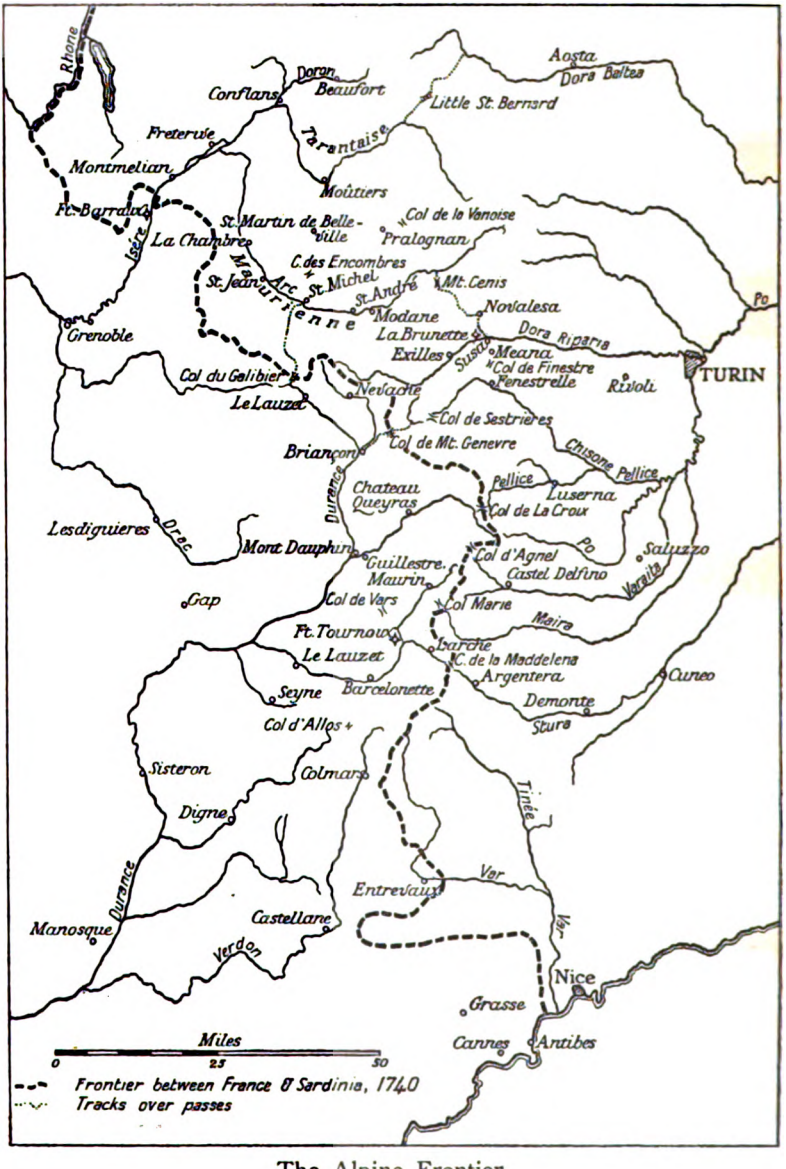
In the presence of the vigilant British fleet there could be no question of transport by sea to Genoa, and as the King of Sardinia had had the defences of his County of Nice put in order and the line of the Var fortified, de Glimes did not consider himself strong enough to attack in that direction. Fleury was still trying to bring about an agreement between Spain and Sardinia. Elizabeth Farnese seems to have suggested that, as Charles Emmanuel was free with a month's notice to terminate his co-operation with Austria, he might before giving such notice remove men, guns, and ammunition from Mantua, so that when the month's notice was expired that fortress would not be in a condition to resist the joint attack of the Spanish and Sardinian forces. Charles Emmanuel declined to discuss a proposal which his reply characterized as dishonourable and this reply stung Elizabeth Farnese, who exclaimed, when it was conveyed to her in veiled language, that she would sacrifice all Spain to be avenged on 'that Italian brute'.[1] She sent peremptory orders to Don Philip to invade Charles Emmanuel's dominions.

Pressing requests came to Fleury both from Madrid and from Don Philip for the assistance of a French army. Fleury could send no troops; the French had more than enough to do in Germany. But he arranged to help de Glimes by sending him a competent adviser. Fleury had consulted the Marquis of Breteuil, Minister of War, to whom D'Asfeld, director-general of fortifications, had recommended Bourcet, an engineer officer, as the man best acquainted with the Alpine frontier.

Pierre Bourcet was born in 1700 at Usseaux in the upper valley of the Chisone, at that date French territory. His father, a French captain, had served with distinction in the Alpine campaigns of the reign of Louis XIV.

[1] Carutti, i. 213–14; Baudrillart, v. 103–5.

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The Alpine Frontier.

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At nineteen Bourcet went to serve as a volunteer in the Pyrenees. At twenty he became an officer, and served for eight years in the infantry regiment, Royal-Vaisseaux. He then became an officer of Engineers and was long stationed at Briançon. His father's conversations had made him familiar with the campaigns in the Alps of Catinat, Tessé, Villars, and Berwick and with the principles of Alpine warfare. He fought with great distinction in the Italian campaigns of the war of the Polish Succession. In 1741 he was sent as Chief Engineer to the army of Maillebois in Westphalia. He was now, in the summer of 1742, ordered to Paris, where Fleury in a long interview convinced himself that he was the right man for the service required. So Bourcet was given the appointment of Chief Engineer of the fortress of Mont Dauphin and was ordered to go there by way of Grasse, where he was to see de Glimes, keeping his mission secret. De Glimes had moved his head-quarters to Grasse for the better security of the Infant in case of a possible English landing at Antibes. Bourcet reached Grasse on the 26th of July, and at once saw de Glimes, who asked for a map of the passes leading into Piedmont and for an account of their military possibilities. He also presented Bourcet to Don Philip, who said he was grateful for Breteuil's interest in his expedition. Bourcet then at once left for Mont Dauphin, where he drew the map required and prepared a memorandum on the cols and valleys offering the easiest routes into Piedmont. This paper gives the topographical basis of the Alpine operations of the next six years, and contains the explanation of them all. Its substance is therefore worth repeating.

The routes by which Piedmont could be invaded from Dauphiné were:

1. The valley of the Dora Riparia. This is blocked by the fort of Exilles, below which the fort of La Brunette bars the descent from the pass of Mont Cenis. Neither of these forts can be taken without a regular siege, which needs elaborate preparations taking much time.

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2. The valley of the Chisone. Here the fortress of Fenestrelle can neither be blockaded nor besieged. An army starting from the Col de Sestrières might move along the mountain between these two valleys, and take the redoubts guarding the Colle delle Fenestre. It could then go down to Meana and descend the valley on its right side reaching the plain at Rivoli. But it could not be kept supplied, as its convoys would be cut off by the garrisons of the fortresses.

3. The route from the Guil valley by the Col de la Croix and the Luserna valley is difficult because of its many defiles and is blocked by the fort of Mirabouc, which cannot be taken.

4. The Stura contains the defile of the Barricades, which cannot be forced, as well as the fortress of Demonte, which would have to be besieged.

5. There remains only the valley of the Varaita. Its advantages are:

(*a*) Fairly good roads that can be widened.

(*b*) No fortress.

(*c*) It can be reached both from the Guil valley and from the valley of the Ubaye.

(*d*) It is full of large villages in which there is plenty of forage.

(*e*) In case of defeat on reaching the plain, it offers a secure retreat by the Guil to Château Queyras, and by the Ubaye to Fort Tournoux, whence there is a road by the Col de Vars to Mont Dauphin.

The paper ended with a detailed plan for the invasion of Piedmont by the valley of the Varaita, which, once the way into it had been forced, was in Bourcet's opinion the best route.

It will be observed that Bourcet considered only an invasion from Dauphiné. The reason is obvious. Dauphiné was French territory and contained the three frontier fortresses of Briançon, Mont Dauphin, and Tournoux, where stores and troops could safely be assembled in preparation for an advance. Savoy and Nice were Charles Emmanuel's territories. They would have to be occupied

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as a preliminary to any attempt at forcing the passes over the great Alpine chain which separated them from Piedmont.

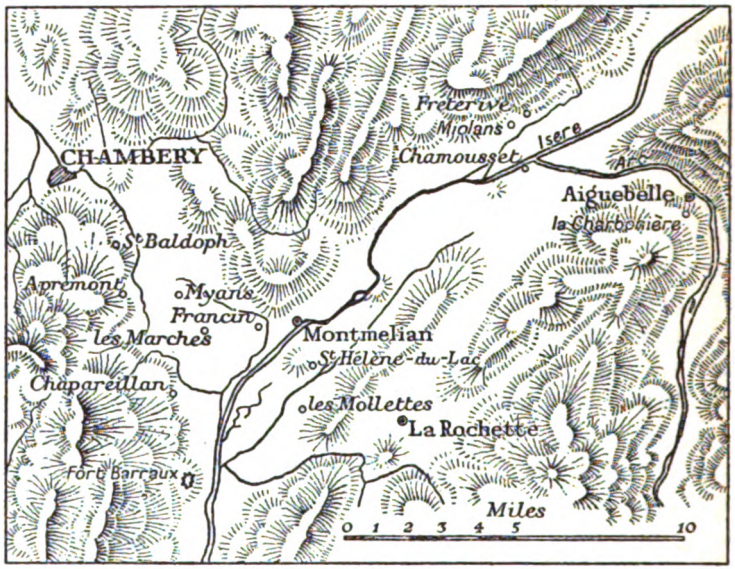
Early in August, de Glimes marched his army in successive fractions by Digne, Seyne, and Le Lauzet to Barcelonnette. Here on the 13th of August Bourcet delivered his map of the frontier and the memorandum, with its plan for invading Piedmont by the valley of the Varaita. But on the 26th of August de Glimes, who had marched from Barcelonnette to Guillestre as though to adopt Bourcet's plan, asked Bourcet to draft a scheme for his march by Briançon into Savoy.

As early as April 1742 Louis XV, yielding to the solicitations of Elizabeth Farnese, had given the Infant his permission, if he wished, to march through Dauphiné to invade Savoy. So de Glimes at Barcelonnette gave up the idea of trying the Col de Larche and the Val Stura and at Guillestre that of passing the mountains to descend the Varaita. He marched on to Briançon and from there by the Col de Galibier to St. Michel en Maurienne. There were in Savoy no troops to resist him, and he marched quietly down the Arc and the Isère to Montemélian and occupied the southern portion of Savoy. He settled his army in winter quarters and set about exacting supplies and money for his ill-disciplined troops from the people of Savoy.

Charles Emmanuel was at Reggio on the way home from Cesena when he heard the unexpected news of the Spanish invasion of Savoy. He pushed on to Turin, where he held a council on September 10. Was he to drive the Spaniards out of Savoy or to leave them there to oppress his subjects? The experience of many campaigns, both of his father and of earlier times, proved that it was impracticable for a Piedmontese army to remain in Savoy during the winter, when the deep snow on the passes cut off all communication with Piedmont. Ormea did his best to dissuade the King from undertaking a winter campaign. But some of the generals urged it and the King thought his honour engaged. A force of 14,000 to

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15,000 men was assembled, the main body at Aosta and a smaller one at Novalesa at the foot of the Mont Cenis, and the advance carefully planned. The Spaniards had a detachment at Moûtiers in the valley of the Isère and another at St. Jean in that of the Arc, with advance posts at St. Michel, St. André, and Modane. The larger Piedmontese column was to cross the little St. Bernard and



The Critical Days in Savoy.

march down the Isère valley to attack the Spaniards wherever they should stand, while detachments were sent in advance by side passes into the valley of the Doron de Beaufort thence to take the Spaniards in rear. The smaller column was to cross the Mont Cenis and descend the Arc valley, sending parties by the Col de la Vanoise and the Col des Encombres to reach Moûtiers by the valleys of Pralognan and St. Martin de Belleville. If the Spaniards held any position in the Isère valley above its juncture with the Arc, the Mont Cenis column from the Arc valley would threaten its retreat. But there was no fight in de Glimes. All his parties retired as the Piedmontese

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approached. The turning movements frightened them, and when the two Piedmontese columns had united and marched on Montmélian he withdrew his whole force and took refuge on French territory behind Fort Barraux, of which the governor sent word to Charles Emmanuel that any attack on the Spanish troops would be regarded by Louis XV as an act of war.

Charles Emmanuel was now in a painful dilemma. It was the middle of October. In a fortnight he had chased the Spaniards out of Savoy. But he could not stay the winter in a country which the Spaniards had so plundered that it was impracticable to supply his army. If he attacked them on French soil he would have to face both Spain and France without any assurance of Austrian help, and he had already annoyed Maria Theresa by refusing to help her invade Naples. He sent a circular note of protest against the attitude of France to the French Court and to each of the Powers guarantors of the existing treaties. He fortified a position facing the French frontier and awaited the attack, which he expected as soon as the Spanish reinforcements, which he knew to be on the march, should arrive. De Glimes received reinforcements and orders to take the offensive. But he only called a council of war, which decided to wait for more reinforcements. Elizabeth Farnese was angry with his delays, said he had proved to be only 'the second volume of Montemar' and recalled him, sending in his place the Marquis de la Mina, who three years before as Ambassador at Paris had made himself detested by the French. La Mina arrived at Fort Barraux on the 5th of December just as de Glimes had completed his plans for an attack on the Piedmontese position.

De Glimes was certainly lacking in enterprise and quite unequal to executing the skilful moves which Bourcet suggested. When he had entered Savoy, Bourcet urged him to hold a position at Fréterive with his left flank established in the castle of Miolans, which he must first take, and a detachment on his right holding La Charbonnière at the entrance of the Arc valley. But de Glimes did

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not attack the castle of Miolans, though it was held only by a handful of Piedmontese and was frightened out of the position by a talk with the *curé* of La Chambre, who told him that in that country it was quite likely that the Piedmontese would be able to carry off the Infant out of the middle of his army on the march.

La Mina found the army, which had received further reinforcements, much stronger than the Piedmontese, which had suffered from long exposure to wet and cold as well as from desertion, so that by the middle of December La Mina had 20,000 men to Charles Emmanuel's 10,000.

The position which Charles Emmanuel had carefully prepared by fortifying its key-points was meant to bar all the routes into Savoy. Its right rested on the Château of Apremont, whence it ran by Myans, Les Marches, and Montmélian to the Isère, and then by St. Helène du Lac and Les Mollettes to La Rochette. A council of war had advised de Glimes that this position was too strong to be attacked in front and must be turned. Bourcet had made a plan for turning it. He proposed that bridges should be thrown across the Isère below Fort Barraux and that a number of pontoons should be put on wagons ready to cross these bridges. The army should then march upon Apremont as if to attack the Piedmontese right, but in the night should turn to the right about, march back, cross the Isère and march to Chamousset, where the pontoons would bridge the Isère and the army cross that river and take position facing south at Fréterive, absolutely blocking the Piedmontese retreat. This was too daring for de Glimes, who left the army without giving the plan to La Mina and without presenting Bourcet to him, so that it was only in the following summer that La Mina knew of Bourcet's mission and appointed him his assistant Quartermaster-General.

La Mina's plan was to attack the Piedmontese right at the Château of Apremont, which was held by only 100 Piedmontese, and at the same time to demonstrate on the left bank of the Isère. He set out on the evening of

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December 18 and marched in two bodies, the first to Apremont, which was invested, and the second to a position just beyond the frontier in front of Chapareillan. Next morning Charles Emmanuel drew out his army from behind Montmélian and took position in front of Francin. Meantime the second Spanish column followed the first to Apremont, Charles Emmanuel not stirring until he was satisfied that the Spanish party that had been sent to attack Les Mollettes, where he had 1,500 men, was a mere demonstration. In the afternoon he moved his army to a new position between Myans and Les Marches, and next morning sent a party to St. Baldoph to observe the Spaniards and report any movement they might make towards Chambéry. This party reported that the garrison of Apremont had capitulated. The two armies were separated by a marsh across which an attack was impracticable. They remained facing one another for a few days, both sides mainly occupied in trying to keep warm. Charles Emmanuel could hardly hope to defeat the Spanish army of double his own strength, nor to keep his own men together in the trying conditions of exposure and with the impossibility of adequate supply. So he decided to march back to Piedmont while it was still possible to cross the passes. On the 28th of December he retreated, covered by a rearguard, to Montmélian, the Spaniards making no attempt to attack him. From Montmélian his army retreated by the two valleys of Tarantaise and Maurienne, and crossed with great hardship the little St. Bernard and the Mont Cenis. The Spaniards pursued with little effect, though General Arteaga reported a successful attack on the rearguard at Aiguebelle—it was a small affair, and a rearguard must always end by retreating—which La Mina for his own glory magnified into a victory, for which Arteaga was promoted to Lieut.-General. But Arteaga found it impossible to force the gorges of the great rock below St. Michel.

The retreat over the passes in the snow after the long winter campaign was disastrous to the Piedmontese army. Many died of exposure, and many were permanently dis-

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abled. Charles Emmanuel to the end of his life thought the winter campaign in Savoy the greatest mistake of his military career. Besides the losses of his army it damaged him with his English and Austrian allies, who, knowing nothing of the conditions, could not understand his retreat. Indeed, the Austrians suspected that it was made by secret agreement with the Spaniards. La Mina, in his dispatches, reported as a glorious victory what was due not to him, but to the climate and the mountains, and he was accordingly promoted to Captain-General, the Spanish equivalent of Field-Marshal.

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IV. 1743: SPANISH DEFEATS IN EAST AND WEST

i. *Eighteenth-Century Armies*

In 1742 European armies, except that of Prussia, were much the same cumbrous machines as those of Marlborough and Eugène. The foot-soldier was still armed with a muzzle-loading flint-lock, but he now had a bayonet which did not interfere with his shooting. The powder was packed in paper cartridges. In loading, the soldier tore off the end of his cartridge with his teeth, dropped a little powder in the pan of the touch-hole, which he closed, and then poured the rest of the powder down the barrel, dropped in the bullet and drove it home with a ramrod, now usually of iron. A good average rate of firing was three shots in two minutes. The flint-lock was without sights, so that accurate aiming was unknown. Its effective range was two hundred yards, though a bullet would kill at five or six hundred.

The infantry usually stood in line four deep, the ranks four yards behind each other, the men in each rank touching one another. A battalion of 500 to 700 men was subdivided into a number of parts (which we may most conveniently call platoons) of ten or a dozen files each. For the purpose of firing the ranks closed up to the front, the first and second ranks kneeling. The platoons fired in turn by volleys, in each platoon one or more ranks firing together. During an advance the platoon of which it was the turn to fire halted, delivered its volley, and then resumed the advance. By this method a continuous fire was kept up, and sufficed to beat off a cavalry charge unless the troops were in disorder, without ammunition, or taken in flank.

Of the artillery, the French, concerning which alone precise information is accessible, seems to have been typical. After the improvements adopted in 1732 it had

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smooth-bore field-guns of 4, 8, and 12 lb., siege guns of 16, and 24 lb., and mortars of 8 and 12 inches. The mortars had an average range of about 800 yards. The 4-pounder and 8-pounder field pieces had a maximum range of 1600 to 2000 yards, but as there were no sights, firing at these ranges was too inaccurate to be of much effect. The projectiles used were round shot, common shell (a hollow ball containing a bursting charge of powder), and case and canister (boxes or bags full of bullets which when fired broke up and set free the bullets). The 12, 8, and 4-pounders could easily be fired two or three times a minute. The smaller guns were usually placed in front of the intervals between battalions, and when the line advanced moved forward with it in those intervals. The 12-pounders, once in position, could hardly be moved during an action.

Except in the Prussian army regular drill, uniformity of movements, and serious musketry instruction were unknown. Even keeping step in time was not practised, and all movements were very slow and complicated. The troops marched in open column of platoons, one platoon behind the other at a distance equal to the front of a platoon. Line was formed from this column, either by the simultaneous wheel of the platoons a quarter circle to the right or left, or by a slow process of deployment. The normal order of battle was the line, the infantry usually in the centre and the cavalry divided between the wings. The reserve consisted of a second line drawn up 300 yards behind the first. Several hours were occupied in the formation of these lines, and until they were complete it was exceedingly dangerous either to attack or be attacked. The enemy could usually march away while the would-be assailant was forming his line, so that it was impracticable, except in special circumstances, to force an enemy to accept battle against his will. Even a general so eager for battle and so confident of success as Marlborough had been unable in five years to bring about more than five battles. A battle once joined was murderous. The number of casualties was usually large, and the beaten side as a rule lost its guns and its baggage and was seldom

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fit for a second battle during the campaign. It was rightly held that a general should not risk a battle unless he felt sure that he would gain more by success than he would lose by defeat, and also of course unless he had a reasonable prospect of victory.

There were few, if any, metalled roads, a roadway being merely a strip of open space, usually much wider than a modern highroad, so that troops could march ten or twelve abreast. The troops were always preceded by pioneers to 'open the march', that is, to mend a road by filling up holes and widen it, if possible, where it was too narrow for the column.

In every age the commander of an army has to solve two problems: how to feed his troops, and how to move them. An army must either carry its food with it or help itself to such food as it can find in the region through which it is moving, in which case it will either pay for what it needs or take it without pay, either by systematic robbery, called requisition, or by promiscuous plunder. In the eighteenth century governments, as far as they could, prohibited plunder. Sometimes the soldiers were billeted on the inhabitants, who were required to provide them with food, either with or without payment; but except in a prosperous and populous region this plan was impracticable, because within the area of a few miles around the camp there would seldom be enough food for 30,000 or 40,000 men, and even if there were it would be all consumed in a day or two, and the men would then starve. Indeed, it was a not uncommon practice for an army to eat up all that was to be found in a district in order to make it impossible for the enemy's army to subsist there. The usual eighteenth-century practice was to supply the army from magazines. Before beginning a campaign a great store was collected at some place near the frontier, and from this the supplies were taken in carts to the army. Two or three days' march from the magazine a number of ovens would be built, and the flour was brought to them in carts or by strings of mules. Bread or biscuit was supplied from the ovens, each man would carry four

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or six days' rations, and carts or mules would ply from the bakeries to the troops with several days' further supplies. But the stream of wagons plying between the magazine and the bakeries, and between the bakeries and the army would very soon wear out the unpaved road, and as the horses or mules must be fed, they had to transport not only the bread but the hay or oats for their own consumption. Thus there was a limit beyond which an army could not be supplied from a magazine. Beyond that limit it was necessary to make a new magazine and repeat the whole proceeding. All this had to be pre-arranged and took time in the execution. Days were spent in filling the magazines, in building the ovens, and in baking. The supply of meat, at any rate in a grazing country, was simpler as the cattle could be driven with the troops and slaughtered when required.

The important part played in eighteenth-century warfare by fortresses is attributable to difficulties of transport. The essence of a fortress was a number of powerful guns so placed that they could sweep with their projectiles the area in front of them for a distance equal to their effective range, some two or three thousand yards. These guns and their gunners were protected against bombardment by a great rampart of earth and against attack at close quarters by a deep wide ditch with sides so steep as to require to be faced with masonry. The engineers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had perfected their systems, with the result that no troops could approach the rampart of a well-constructed fortress without being exposed to the heaviest shot and shell. The general who proposed to take a fortress must first post his troops at a safe distance all round it, so that they could prevent reinforcements or provisions from being brought in. Thus invested the garrison would have to rely on its existing supply of food and would therefore in time be starved into surrender. It was a slow process, and while it lasted would detain a large body of troops to keep up the investment. In order to take the fortress before the garrison could be starved it was necessary first to destroy, dis-

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mount, or silence the guns protecting the point to be attacked, then to batter down the rampart and the sides of the ditch and finally to storm the breach thus produced.

The investment being completed and the point of attack selected, the besieger's infantry approached the fortress by a trench traced in a zigzag so that the defender's guns could not fire along it. They would then dig a trench parallel to the rampart partly by way of protection for themselves against a sortie and partly as a position from which by their own musketry fire to harry the defenders. Behind the infantry and under its protection the gunners would bring up their guns into the positions prepared for them. When the batteries had made a breach in the rampart and broken down a portion of the sides of the great ditch, the infantry collected in the parallel rushed forward to the breach.

The ordinary siege guns, firing projectiles of 12, 16, or 24 lb., weighed from 1½ to 2½ tons each. It was not easy to drag them along the unpaved or ill-paved roads of that period. They required also a great weight of shot, shell, and other stores. The powder and shot for one round per gun of a six-gun battery of 24-lb. guns was a mule load. No siege could be undertaken without ammunition enough for many days' bombardment from several batteries. It was a very arduous business to move for any considerable distance the guns and ammunition required for a siege, especially if the route passed through a mountainous country such as the Alps or Apennines. This is the explanation of the delays and difficulties occasioned to an invading army by every fortress which it was compelled to besiege.

A fortress could not hold out for ever. Its defence would last for a time proportionate to the skill and expense bestowed upon its construction, to the courage of its garrison, and to their supply of food and ammunition. Vauban held that any well-constructed fortress ought to be able to resist a month's siege.

Suppose an invading army of 30,000 men to be opposed by a defending army of 20,000, the invader might fairly

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count upon a victory in the open field. But suppose the defender to have a fortress which blocked the invader's route and had a garrison of 3,000 men. The invader would have to devote at least 10,000 men to the investment of the fortress. His chance of victory in the field would be very much less with the numbers thus reduced to 20,000 against 17,000. The invader, in a hostile country and at a distance from his base of supplies, might, if the siege lasted a month, have lost by exposure, fatigue, and sickness, the whole margin of 3,000 men by which his force was superior to that of the defender, who would probably during the same time, being in his own country, have increased his strength by recruiting.

The art of using fortification properly lay in the choice of sites. No general will go out of his way to besiege a fortress which does not incommode him. The fortress therefore must be so placed that the invader will be compelled to attack it, either because it blocks the road by which he must advance, or by which his supplies must come, or because it is so near that road that its garrison, unless shut in by investment, can come out and disturb his communications.

In a mountainous country the fortress will be well placed either in a defile or near the exit from it; in a plain, at the point where a great road crosses a river or at the confluence of two rivers.

The march of an army has to be very carefully pre-arranged. In the period with which we have to deal an army fought as a single mass, and if there was any chance of collision with an enemy it must be kept together. A body of 30,000 men with a number of guns, ammunition carts, and provision carts, fills up so many miles of road that it forms a column at least a day's march long, and would take many hours to pass a given point, or to be assembled ready for battle. If there were an enemy within a march or two, and if there were several parallel roads or the country were open, it might be convenient to march in four parallel columns, the two centre ones being the infantry of the first and second lines of the battle formation, and the

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two outer ones being the cavalry of the two wings. By this plan time was saved in case it should be necessary to form for battle.

Until the end of the eighteenth century there were no accurate maps, so that before a march could be arranged it was necessary to reconnoitre the ground, to examine the roads, and to study the site of the camp to be reached in the afternoon. All these arrangements were the business of the Quartermaster-General, whose duty it was to work them out in advance and to embody them in the orders for all concerned, which he submitted for the approval of his Commander-in-Chief. These functions made the Quartermaster-General the confidential assistant of the Commander in everything that concerned the movements of the army.

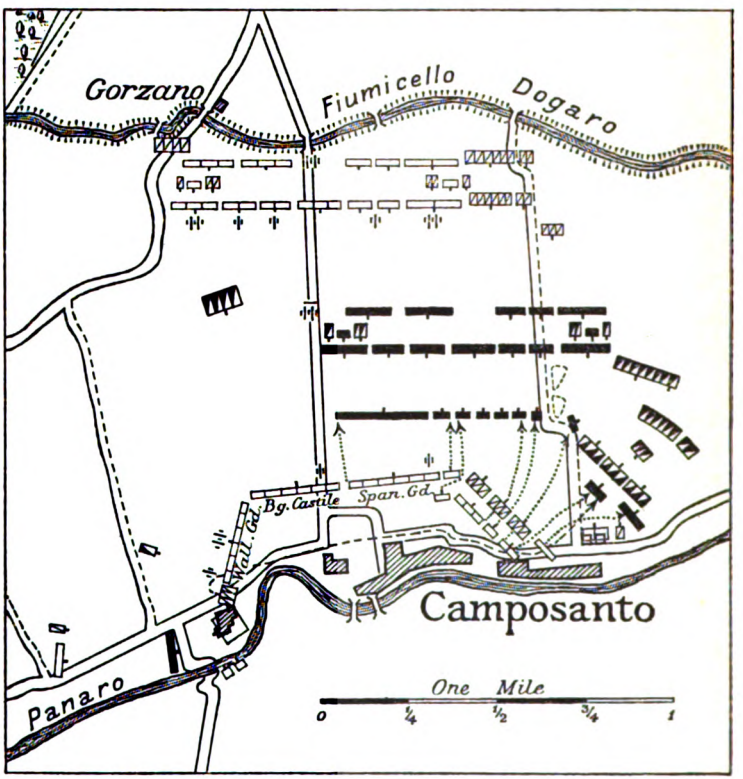
The difficulties of supply and movement, the cumbrousness of all evolutions, and the impracticability of forcing a battle on an unwilling enemy caused the operations of eighteenth-century armies to be very much slower than those of the period which began with the French Revolution. Another cause of constant delay was the time taken in the transmission of instructions from a Government to its Commander-in-Chief in the field, and of reports from the Commander to his Government. In 1743 it took eight days for an order from Versailles to reach the French Governor of Briançon; in 1747 a letter from Louis XV to Mentone was eleven days *en route*; in 1743 a letter from Elizabeth Farnese at Madrid to her Commander at Bologna could not be delivered under three weeks.

ii. *Campo Santo*

ELIZABETH FARNESE was elated by what she supposed was La Mina's great achievement in Savoy. She thought Charles Emmanuel beaten, and that the opportunity had come to strike at Austria. De Gages had received, apparently by transports that had evaded the British fleet, reinforcements bringing up his strength to 15,000 com-

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batants. She sent him peremptory orders, which reached Bologna on the 31st of January, 1743, to attack the Austrians without delay. De Gages did not think he was strong enough to win a battle, nor, without his heavy guns, which had been sent back by Montemar to Orbetello,



Battle of Campo Santo.

to besiege Modena or Mirandola. But, as he must obey orders or be dismissed, he determined to fall upon the Austrians by surprise before they could be collected from their winter quarters. To prevent their hearing of his movement he guarded the exits from Bologna and, after a ball on the night of the 1st of February, put his army in march. He reached Campo Santo on the 3rd, threw bridges over the Panaro, crossed the river, and encamped on the other side.

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Traun had good friends in Bologna, who managed to send word to his head-quarters at Carpi of the Spanish preparations and start. On February 3 he sent orders to all his scattered troops to assemble at Bomporto, and marched thither at once with the nearest battalions. By the evening of the 5th all the troops, Piedmontese as well as Austrian, had arrived, making a total force of 11,800 men, with which to meet de Gages's army of 15,000. The four Piedmontese battalions at Pavia and Piacenza were not moved. On the 4th de Gages marched up the left bank of the Panaro half-way to Bomporto and sent on a reconnoitring party, which reported the Austrian army to be there assembled, facing north, with its right covered by the Panaro, and its left by the canal called the Fiumicello. De Gages encamped where he stood, made a further reconnaissance on the 5th, and, as it was evident that he had not surprised Traun, decided to return to Bologna.

He marched back to Campo Santo, encamped there, and issued his orders for the baggage to recross the Panaro preparatory to his march back to Bologna. But he heard from prisoners taken during the night that the Austrians had moved forward to within three miles of Campo Santo. This could mean only that they meant to attack him. His baggage had become crowded at the bridges, and it would be a day's work to restore order and clear the bridges for the troops. It would be an affair of several hours for his army to cross by the two bridges, and to be attacked during the process would be fatal. He could not retire across the river without fighting, and if defeated with the river at his back very little of his army could escape. So at three in the morning of February 7 he ordered the troops to be drawn up for defence. He had thirty-three battalions of some 400 men each, grouped into four brigades of six battalions, one of four and one of five. As the enemy would come from his left he made his left strong. It rested on the bank of the Panaro, where a large farm-house was occupied by the five-battalion brigade, Parma. From this farm the six-battalion Walloon Brigade

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formed a line a quarter of a mile long, pointing away from the river. Then the line turned sharply to the right to run for three-quarters of a mile parallel to the general direction of the river. This part of the line was formed of the six-battalion brigades of Castile and the Spanish Guards. From the right of the Guards to the river the space was filled by nine squadrons aligned at an obtuse angle with the line of the Guards. The two remaining brigades were in reserve behind the first line. To the right of the cavalry a group of houses by the river was occupied by light troops. The bridges were behind the centre.

There was no attack on the 7th, so that de Gages had the whole day for the ordering of his position, for clearing the bridges, and for getting his baggage away. Traun thought that de Gages, having failed to surprise him, would retreat to Bologna. In that case he would let him go without fighting; but if he offered to stay on the left bank of the Panaro he would attack him. In order to hasten his retreat and to be within striking distance if there was no retreat, Traun had marched on the 6th from Bomporto, behind the canal Fiumicello, to within three miles of Campo Santo. Protected by the canal he halted for the night. Next morning he formed his army in order of battle in two lines, sent a party to reconnoitre the enemy, and on the report that they had taken a position for defence rode on to examine their position for himself. He rode back to camp at noon and called a council of war out of consideration for Aspremont, the general commanding the Piedmontese contingent. The question was whether to risk an attack on an enemy of superior numbers in a strong position. Aspremont was only too delighted to have the chance, so it was decided to attack next day, as it was too late to begin on the 7th and as Traun wanted to wait for some heavy guns from the fortress of Mirandola. On the morning of the 8th Traun's troops fell in in formation for battle in two lines, and he explained his plan to his generals. He would engage the Spanish left with light troops and would deliver his main attack on their right, which rested on no obstacle and where the ground gave

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scope for cavalry. The army must therefore be so placed in front of the enemy that the cavalry forming its left wing should reach as far as the Panaro.

The troops moved to their left behind the Fiumicello, which they crossed by the two bridges (one for each column) of Gorzano, and then wheeling to the left, formed up facing the Spaniards about a mile away. The bridges were reached at noon, and the army drawn up in two lines about half-past one. Meantime the light troops engaged the Spanish left wing—the brigade of Parma in the farm by the Panaro and the Walloon Brigade. This action was kept up all day, and occupied the two Spanish brigades till dark.

Soon after noon de Gages could judge from the direction of the enemy's approach and movements that the attack would strike his right rather than his left, and he then ordered the battalions in reserve to place themselves behind the cavalry on his right. He posted three batteries of field artillery in front of the two brigades of his first line, and one in front of his left wing. He himself took post with his left wing, where he remained throughout the battle.

Traun's line was parallel to the front of the Spaniards. In order to overlap the Spanish line he must move his own to its left. Accordingly, when about two o'clock Traun began his advance, his line had to move forward obliquely, and as the preservation of its order was vital, the movement, over ground broken by many ditches, was exceedingly slow. After two hours the front line had advanced only a thousand yards; its right rested on the Campo Santo–Felice road; its left stretched some distance beyond the right of the Spanish infantry of the first line.

General Macdonald, commanding the Spanish Guards, now moved forward his part of the line and prolonged it to its right, as far as a pond, with six battalions from the reserve, and posted a seventh on the right of the pond.

The Austro-Sardinian cavalry was between the left of the infantry and the river. Its first line of two squadrons, followed by six squadrons of Miglio cuirassiers, was ordered by its commander, General Payersberg, to move

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to its left so as to be more on the enemy's flank. It was a rash move, for nine squadrons of Spanish cavalry stood only 300 yards away in formation ready to charge. The Spanish general saw his opportunity and led his five right squadrons to the charge. The two squadrons of Savoy cuirassiers leading the Austrian first line wheeled round to take the Spaniards in flank, but the Spaniard met them with two of his squadrons, which beat them off, and with the other three charged the Miglio cuirassiers in flank before they could wheel into line. Immediately afterwards the remaining four Spanish squadrons also charged into the Miglio cuirassiers, who were completely broken and driven from the field.

The eight squadrons of Berlichingen cuirassiers forming the Austro-Sardinian second line came up to charge the Spaniards in flank, but they had to pass the Spanish battalion posted by the pond. Its men were lying down so as not to be seen, and as the Austro-Sardinian cavalry approached, stood up and received them at close range with a burst of fire which worked havoc. At that instant the cuirassiers were charged in flank by three Spanish squadrons which Major-General de la Torre had brought just in time from the left wing of the Spanish position. This charge at the critical moment was too much for the cuirassiers already shaken by the storm of bullets, and they too were driven from the field.

The complete victory of the Spanish cavalry was a bad beginning for the Allies, who had counted on the numerical, and as was thought, the qualitative superiority of their mounted troops. Luckily for them the Spanish cavalry, instead of turning on the Austrian infantry, followed the retreating horsemen, and when assembled after the pursuit, returned to their original position, and took no further part in the action.

The Austrian heavy guns from Mirandola had been firing some time on the Spanish front line, and the field-guns in front of the Austrian infantry now also opened a damaging fire. About half-past four the advancing allies came within musketry range and a hot fire-fight began.

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The Spaniards suffered from the Austrian artillery, and determined to take the guns. So their front line charged with the bayonet, and there was a terrible struggle in which the Austrian battalions forming the right half of their front line were driven back. A Piedmontese regiment from the second line came up in support and Aspremont with the Piedmontese left wing of the first line attacked the Spaniards in flank. The Spaniards were driven back exhausted, but Aspremont fell dangerously wounded, and his second in command was wounded and taken prisoner.

There was a pause in which the two first lines restored their order. It was six o'clock and dark. De Gages did nothing to support his first line. The greater part of the second line had shared in its struggle, and the remaining four battalions were kept in reserve. The two brigades of the left wing were absorbed in their resistance to the light troops. At seven o'clock the Piedmontese General Leutrum brought forward four fresh Piedmontese battalions from the second line and Traun sent on three more, and with these forces Leutrum pushed on and drove back the Spaniards, who retired in good order. A Spanish battalion (Guadalajara) posted in the Cascine on the left of the pond was captured, and the whole Spanish line fell back fighting to its original position. Here three Walloon battalions from the left wing were led by their brigadier against the Piedmontese right flank, but were ordered back by de Gages, who, however, saw that he had made a mistake and ordered two battalions of Castile to join in the attack on the Austrian right. These mistook the returning Walloons for the enemy, and there was a savage fight in which 200 men were killed and wounded before the error was discovered. Traun sent his right-hand battalion to cover the threatened flank. The allied troops at length pressed on to the Spanish position fortified the day before. It was not taken. At nine o'clock Traun ordered a retirement and withdrew his troops to the position in which they had stood at noon. There they waited for morning, Traun being determined to renew his attack at dawn.

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Tactically it was a drawn battle, though the Spaniards had the heavier losses, 3,464 or 23 per cent. of their force, against an allied loss of 1,751 or 14 per cent. The Austrian and Sardinian troops felt themselves victorious, and were ready to attack again, having been withdrawn because it was impossible in the dark to direct the assault on the Spanish fortified position. The Spaniards had held the position which had been prepared to cover the retreat upon which de Gages had all along been determined. They too thought themselves victorious.

When Traun next morning led forward his troops, the Spaniards had disappeared. De Gages had begun to cross the Panaro at 3 in the morning, and by daylight only a few mountain guns had still to pass the bridges. Their withdrawal was covered by light troops, and the bridges then set on fire. At 9 the retreat was resumed and was continued that day to San Giovanni, twelve miles away. On the 10th the Spanish army reached Bologna and resumed its old position. To Alberoni's congratulations de Gages replied: 'At least I have had the honour of executing the orders of my King and Master.' He sent de la Torre with the captured colours and the report of a victory to Madrid, where Torre was created Marquis of Campo Santo, de Gages made Captain-General, and most of his generals promoted.

Traun naturally supposed that his attack had compelled the Spanish retreat and reported a victory to Vienna. Immediate pursuit was impracticable as the bridges were burnt, and the 9th was spent in burying the dead. When on the 10th Traun raised the question of following up the enemy and driving him from Bologna, the only unwounded Piedmontese general, Cinzano, said that he had the king's orders not to cross the Panaro. The Austrians were not strong enough to advance alone, so that Traun could do no more than send forward his cavalry to ascertain what had become of the enemy. On the 12th the rest of the Austrian and Sardinian troops returned to the billets they had occupied in December.

At Vienna and at Turin a victory was celebrated, as it

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turned out with good reason. De Gages at Bologna was short of supplies as his army had already eaten up the district. His troops suffered from an epidemic which sent him too to bed, and when ordered to resume the offensive he asked to be given a command elsewhere. Traun received reinforcements and quartered his light horse in the rich district of Ferrara. His foraging parties appeared at Minerbio and Traghetto, and de Gages began to fear for his supplies and communications, and even to expect an attack, in which case a flood on the Santerno, near Imola, might block his retreat and lead to the ruin of his army. A council of war agreed that the army could not withstand an attack. On the 26th of March he left Bologna and retired by easy stages to Cesena and Rimini, where he billeted his troops for the rest of the winter.

The battle of Campo Santo justifies the reputation of Traun as one of the best generals of the day. His plan of overlapping the Spanish right anticipated by many years Frederick's plan at Kolin. The one like the other involved a flank movement across the enemy's front, and in the one case as in the other the enemy moved forward to meet it. But Traun had completed his movement before the Spaniards could interfere with it whereas Frederick's plan broke down under the Austrian interruption. For the failure of his cavalry Traun was not responsible. He was entitled to expect that his own more numerous cavalry, supposed to be the best in Europe, would not only defeat the Spanish cavalry but would take in flank and cripple the Spanish infantry. The courage and coolness with which, after the unexpected defeat of his cavalry, he conducted the infantry action, proved that his character was on a level with his intelligence. The result of the battle was to secure for many months the Italian dominions of Maria Theresa.

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iii. *Treaty of Worms. Chianale. Recall of Traun*

TEN days before the battle of Campo Santo, two of the ministers, Maurepas and Amelot, waited upon Louis XV to report that the aged Fleury had at length passed away. 'Ah,' said the king, 'so now I am Prime Minister!' He appointed no successor to Fleury, and himself presided at the meetings of the Privy Council. Amelot, who had been Fleury's secretary for foreign affairs, retained that office. Philip V, in his letter of condolence to Louis on the Cardinal's death, said, 'I hope that your Majesty will also be good enough to obtain the establishment of the Infant Don Philip, my son, and the Infanta, your daughter. Your Majesty certainly could not give me a greater pleasure than that.' Amelot shared Fleury's view that nothing was practicable in Italy without the alliance of Sardinia, and Louis, while always willing to do whatever he could to please his father's brother Philip V, and anxious to promote the welfare of his favourite daughter the Infanta, had no desire to quarrel with his mother's brother, Charles Emmanuel.

It was known that the Convention of Turin left Charles Emmanuel free to change sides. Accordingly in May the French Ambassador at Turin again proposed an alliance with France and Spain. Charles Emmanuel's policy had not changed. He still meant to co-operate with Austria in resistance to the aggrandizement of the House of Bourbon in Italy, but he also meant, if possible, to obtain in return the cession by Austria of the territory which he wanted. He had entrusted his negotiations with Vienna to Lord Carteret, who was the zealous advocate of his terms. But Maria Theresa steadfastly refused to give him what he wanted. In Germany she was carrying all before her. Early in May, King George II with the 'Pragmatic Army' was on the Main; and the French army was driven out of Bavaria by Prince Charles of Lorraine. On June 27 King George won the battle of Dettingen.

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Maria Theresa, in the flush of success, could see no reason for making large concessions to Charles Emmanuel, who had refused to help her against Naples. Moreover, she was disposed to think poorly of him after his retreat from Savoy.

Charles Emmanuel was anxious to gain time. The winter campaign in Savoy had sadly thinned the ranks of his army, which would take months to make up its losses. He was also pushing to completion the defences of his Alpine frontier. The longer he could postpone the opening of the campaign the better he would be prepared for it. Accordingly the new French overtures of May 1743 were welcome. He replied that, though he was negotiating through the British Government with Maria Theresa, he was not bound to Austria, and he sent to Solaro, his Ambassador at Paris, proposals of his own for the suggested treaty with France, explaining to him that his object was merely to gain time, and that he had therefore proposed terms so advantageous to himself that he expected them to be rejected. The conditions which he suggested were that in case the combined invasion of Austrian territory in Italy should be successful, he should annex the entire Duchy of Milan with so much of that of Piacenza as lay north of the Po, and that Don Philip should have the Duchies of Mantua, Parma, and Piacenza south of the Po, and the Island of Sardinia. Don Philip must, of course, immediately restore Savoy to him. To his surprise Louis XV was ready to meet his wishes, and even to obtain the agreement of the Spanish Court to his terms. It cost them nothing to cede Maria Theresa's territory. Ormea had to find means of delaying the conclusion of the Treaty while urging Ossorio, his representative at the Court of St. James's, now at Worms with George II, to push on the negotiations with Austria.

Ormea asked for copies of the Spanish treaties with Bavaria and with Modena, and wrote that the King of Sardinia must receive from France or Spain a subsidy in lieu of the English subsidy, which, of course, he would lose if he joined the Franco-Spanish alliance. He also suggested

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that the Spanish Government should pay to Sardinia the money still owing for artillery hired during the last war. On the 15th of June Amelot told Solaro that all these conditions would be accepted. On the 29th Ormea wrote asking for the text of the proposed treaty. This was sent and on the 9th of August was returned to Paris with Ormea's corrections.

On the 22nd of August Solaro at Paris was informed that Louis XV accepted as it stood the draft Treaty sent from Turin. Charles Emmanuel thereupon replied that he had just heard from Ossorio at Worms (where, as the French Government knew, he was negotiating with Maria Theresa) that his terms had been accepted by the Queen of Hungary, except as to certain details, and that King George II had begged him to postpone his final decision until the return of the messenger from Vienna; that, after all King George had done for him, he could not refuse this request, and that, therefore, he could not authorize Solaro to sign the treaty with France until he heard from King George, whose courier he was daily expecting. At the same time Ormea sent for Villette, the English representative at Turin, who had all along been in his confidence, and told him that unless the treaty with Maria Theresa were executed in the time needed for a courier to travel to Worms and back, the king, his master, would be obliged to conclude the agreement with France. This produced the desired effect. A treaty between Austria, England, and Sardinia was signed at Worms on the 13th of September, 1743. By this treaty Charles Emmanuel renounced his claims on the Duchy of Milan and guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction. Maria Theresa ceded to him the County of Anghiera, the district of Vigevano west of the Ticino, and her territory south of the Po as far as the River Nura; of all these he was to have immediate possession. She also ceded to him any rights she might have in the Marquisate of Finale. He undertook to put 40,000 men in the field, and Maria Theresa promised to increase her forces in Italy to 30,000 as soon as conditions in Germany should make this possible. England undertook to keep a strong

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fleet in the Mediterranean and to pay a subsidy of £200,000 a year to Sardinia. A secret article recorded the intention of the Allies to expel the Bourbons from Italy, after which Austria was to receive Naples and the Presidii, and Sardinia to have Sicily.

Maria Theresa, though she ratified the treaty, resented the way in which her hand had been forced, and complained that her English allies, instead of defending her dominions, insisted on her ceding them.

If Maria Theresa felt that she had been forced into unwelcome concessions, Charles Emmanuel also had good reason to be not quite satisfied with the terms of the treaty. The prospect of the annexation of Sicily was contingent and remote. In any case its possession would be an embarrassment unless it were accompanied by the acquisition of Finale also. But the clause by which Maria Theresa ceded her rights in Finale was open to the objection upon which Ormea had all along insisted, that it must embitter the relations of Charles Emmanuel with Genoa. For that reason Ormea had proposed that Genoa should be compensated by equivalent territory to be obtained for her by Great Britain and Austria. The clause as it stood had the effect which Ormea had foreseen; when it became known it was keenly resented by the Genoese and eventually drove them into alliance with the Bourbon monarchies.

Elizabeth Farnese was impatient of delay, and had only reluctantly agreed to the negotiations with Charles Emmanuel. She was constantly ordering La Mina to begin operations, sending no less than eight such orders between March and September. She proposed to avoid difficulties with Charles Emmanuel by ordering La Mina to march through Switzerland to Lombardy, but this was prevented by the declaration of the Swiss Cantons that they would resist by force any violation of their neutrality. La Mina persistently postponed any movement. His troops had wasted away in the winter campaign and he required large reinforcements. These were sent, though extreme measures had to be taken to carry out the necessary

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recruiting in Spain. By the beginning of September his forces amounted to 25,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Louis XV, though he promised to reinforce La Mina with 24 heavy guns and 14 French battalions, would not allow his own troops to act against Charles Emmanuel while he was expecting to obtain his alliance.

In the spring La Mina had to plan his operations for the invasion of Piedmont. From Savoy there were only two routes into Piedmont, those by the Little St. Bernard and by the Mont Cenis. He found that neither was practicable. On the Little St. Bernard, he wrote, there were defiles where fifty men could stop an army. The Mont Cenis route was blocked at its Italian end by the fortress of La Brunette, near Susa, which could not be taken without artillery, and across the pass itself it was hardly possible to move guns. The only plan was to march into Dauphiné and start his attack from there. He had been made acquainted with the memoir which Bourcet had prepared the year before for de Glimes, and he adopted Bourcet's plan of an advance by the valley of the Varaita. This was approved by both Courts. But the very high passes leading from Savoy into Dauphiné were closed by the snow until the end of June, and by that time the negotiations were pending. At length the orders from Madrid became peremptory. He must take his army to Dauphiné, and thence, either as a friend or an enemy, according to the result of the negotiations, must enter Piedmont. He appointed Bourcet his Quartermaster-General, and Bourcet arranged the march from Savoy to Briançon, taking every precaution against the possible hostile action of Charles Emmanuel. Bourcet's arrangements were a model of staff work, both as regards the march and the precautions which were necessary, because, in spite of the negotiations, Spain was in fact at war with Sardinia.

The army was divided into two columns following each other at two days' interval, moving by the valley of the Arc to St. Michel-en-Maurienne, whence they passed, the one to the left, the other to the right of Valloire. From this point, the left column marched by the Aiguille Noire (Col de

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la Plagnette) to Névache, and the right column by the Col de la Ponsonnière to Le Lauzet. From these places, both columns reached Briançon the same day. In order to protect the flank of the left column, parties were posted on all the cols of the ridge which separates the valley of Névache from the Piedmontese valley of Bardonnechia—the Cols of La Muande, du Vallon, des Thures, de l'Echelle, and des Acles. This was in accord with the principle that before you attempt to march through a defile you must occupy all the positions which command it on that flank which is exposed to a possible attack.

The Infant and La Mina reached Briançon on the 8th of September and were met by the Governor of Dauphiné, Comte de Marcieu, who wrote that evening to the Comte d'Argenson (Minister of War since August 1742):

'It seems that M. le Marquis de La Mina, in spite of all the difficulties which he himself foresees in his future operations, is quite determined to make some attempt against these parts of Piedmont, at the risk of producing a second volume of Campo Santo, and sacrificing if need be as the first victim the Infant Don Philip. He says that "they are bent upon it" and that "when the wine has been drawn it must be drunk". He asked me whether our French troops would go forward, though they are not perfectly equipped and the artillery cannot be ready till the end of the month. I replied that they certainly would and that we were ready to execute the Infant's orders whatever the state of our equipment. To sum up, this general seems to me pretty anxious and hardly to hope more than the public for the success of attempts so late in the season.'

On the 12th came a letter from Madrid to say that the treaty with Charles Emmanuel was practically settled, and waited only for the formality of that king's signature. The moment it was ratified La Mina was to march into Piedmont and to join de Gages. La Mina then ordered his heavy guns to be halted at Lesdiguières (on the way from Grenoble to Gap), as he would not need them on a peaceful march, and ceased the collection of supplies, as they would be bought *en route* in Piedmont. He would take his army by the Mont Genévre.

But on the 18th of September came from Versailles the

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news that there was to be no treaty with Charles Emmanuel. At a conference on the 21st, La Mina announced that he would carry out the original plan, would not wait for the heavy guns, but would be content with 17 four-pounders from Embrun and Mont Dauphin and would start on the 24th.

At this conference were present the Infant Don Philip, and all the Spanish and French generals. To them Bourcet explained the plan which he had worked out for the invasion of Piedmont by the valley of the Varaita. After giving an account of the topography of the district, he proposed that the army should move in three columns, of which two should cross the Cols d'Agnel and St. Veran and come down to Chianale, while the third, starting from the Maurin, should descend the valley of the Varaita de Bellino in order to turn the Piedmontese entrenchments which blocked the valley of the Varaita de Chianale.[1] This plan had the approval of all the officers present except La Mina, who rejected the third column on the ground that it involved a circuitous march, and that he wished to save time and avoid the dispersal of his forces. A day or two later he told Marcieu that he had peremptory orders to attack at once.

On September 24 the left column, 33 Spanish battalions, accompanied by La Mina and the Infant, marched from Briançon by Cervières, the Col d'Izzouard, and Château Queyras to Molines. The right column, 15 Spanish battalions, followed by the 14 French battalions from La Bessée, marched down the valley of the Durance to Guillestre. From Guillestre this column marched to Ceillac, and thence by the Col Fromage to Ville Vieille, and through Molines to La Chalp on the way to the Col of St. Veran. These marches were completed on the 28th of September. On the 2nd of October the two

[1] In the various reprints of Bourcet's papers the route assigned to the third column is by the Col Longet. This must be a slip for Col de l'Autaret, as the Col Longet leads from Maurin to Chianale, and the only way from Maurin to the Varaita de Bellino is by the Col de l'Autaret.

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columns started for the Cols d'Agnel and St. Veran, and after six hours' march halted on the French side of the Cols, as the advance guards were opposed by parties of Vaudois, whom La Mina intended to drive away next day. Each of the Cols is over 9,000 feet high. There had already been a slight snowfall, and the night was bitterly cold. Both columns halted on the third, while the advance guards drove off the parties of Vaudois. On the 4th the advance was resumed, and the two columns picked their way down the long descent to the first Italian village, Chianale, where by midnight the greater part of them had arrived. On the 5th, while the remainder of the troops reached Chianale, La Mina rode forward to reconnoitre as well as he could on a misty day.

Chianale lies in the centre of a great basin in the mountains, about six miles across, of which the rim is from 8,000 to 10,000 feet high, except on the west, where it rises to the rocky peak of Monte Viso, 12,000 feet above the sea. The basin is drained by two streams, the Varaita de Chianale and the Vallante, which washes the foot of Monte Viso. At their junction was a half-ruined castle, called Castello di Ponte, and the space between them is filled by a mountain called Tre Chiosis, 9,500 feet high. The only way out of this basin is by the gorge of the Varaita between Castello di Ponte and Casteldelfino, a deep gap between the lower slopes of Monte Viso and the great ridge of Pietralunga.

Charles Emmanuel had carefully prepared a position for the defence. An entrenchment had been made along the left bank of the Vallante from the foot of Monte Viso to the Varaita; thence the position ran up the slope of Monte Cavallo, and along the side of Pietralunga. A position had also been entrenched athwart the valley of Bellino, running down from Monte Cavallo to Ribierra and thence to the Col Bicocca, and there was in this valley an advance post at La Gardetta. A few troops and one or two guns were placed in the Castello di Ponte, which was a little distance in front of the main position.

The march of 30,000 men from Briançon to the Guil

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valley could, of course, not be kept secret, so that Charles Emmanuel had ample notice of the impending attack, and had time to assemble 15,000 men to defend the works which he had prepared. He had issued very careful orders, instructing the troops not to show themselves over the parapet until ordered to fire, not to fire volleys, but to keep to independent firing, each man aiming carefully and never higher than the knees of the enemy.

About noon on the 5th of October the sun broke the mist for a short time, and La Mina with his staff could see the castle at Ponte. He thought it was weakly fortified and could easily be taken after bombardment. But he could not see the hills behind it, though he was told by the inhabitants that the main position was on those hills and looked down from each side on the castle. On the 6th La Mina moved his camp two miles farther down the valley, and made a further reconnaissance, of which the result was that he planned his attack for the 7th. One column was to attack the slopes of Pietralunga, a second those of Monte Cavallo, a third the Castello di Ponte, a fourth was to mount the slopes of Tre Chiosis in order to obtain a plunging fire on the castle. The fifth column was to march round Tre Chiosis to the Col Vallante, and then to descend the valley of the Vallante, in order to roll up the defenders in that valley from their right flank. This fifth column was composed of four French battalions and about a thousand Spanish troops, altogether about 3,500 men. The first four columns, in spite of their continuous musketry firing, were unable to deliver any effective attack. A dozen field guns bombarded the castle all the afternoon, and when about dusk the third column moved forward to the assault it found the castle abandoned, and no enemy visible. In the evening La Mina heard from the fifth column that it had had a hard climb, was in difficulties on icy ground, but would deliver its attack next day. La Mina believed that the Piedmontese had retreated, and sent to Madrid a report of his victory: 'The King of Sardinia usually retires before our Generalissimo, the Infant. As he did at Montmélian so he is doing at Castello di Ponte.'

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He added that the Infant had had his baptism of fire, and that a private secretary standing by him had been wounded. He also sent word to the officer commanding the fifth column that the Piedmontese had abandoned the position.

Next day, the 8th, La Mina discovered that the enemy had not retreated, so he renewed his attack, but every attempt to approach the entrenchments was repulsed, and he began to be anxious for the success of his fifth column and his flank attack. About 4 o'clock this column, descending the right bank of the Vallante, found itself opposite the end of the Piedmontese entrenchment, which was on the left bank. At this moment the officer commanding received La Mina's message of the night before. No one was visible in the Piedmontese trenches, and, believing that the enemy had left, he marched down the path on the right bank with drums beating, as though he were in his own country. When the Piedmontese saw the column thus marching, almost under the muzzles of their flint-locks, they stood up and fired down on them. The French and Spaniards were helpless. They could not cross the stream to attack; it was useless to try and return the fire; to go back was no better than to go on. Those in front ran down the path, most of the others climbed up the hill on their right, and made their way over the mountain back to camp. La Mina that night reported that this column had lost 500 men, but this proved to be an exaggerated estimate.

In the evening La Mina assembled a Council of War to which Bourcet read an opinion to the effect that the enemy's entrenchments on their right were impenetrable as they rested on an inaccessible mountain, while on their left they were half-way up a mountain, exceedingly difficult of approach, and so steep that the assailants must be exhausted before they could reach them; that the valley was too narrow to give room for deployment, and that even if deployed there were so many ravines that no formation could be kept. There was, moreover, a risk that if an attack were attempted against Pietralunga, the troops there posted might move along the rim to the passes by

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which the army had come, and might cut off all retreat. La Mina required a written opinion from each of the generals. Two of them proposed an attack on the Piedmontese right wing, all the others were in favour of retreat, saying that, as it was caused by the weather, it could not be thought dishonourable. La Mina, however, insisted on waiting and renewing the attack on Pietralunga. The next day was spent in the preparation of paths for an advance against Pietralunga, and in musketry firing to cover the working parties. But during the day came a fresh order from Madrid instructing the Infant to take the army back to Savoy, and to put it into winter quarters with a view to a future advance by the Little St. Bernard or the Mont Cenis, in order to keep the Piedmontese from helping the Austrians against Don Carlos.

Next day, the 10th of October, before dawn, the French and Spanish troops fell in for the retreat. The sick and wounded were sent back to Chianale, and the houses at Ponte Chianale[1] were set on fire. The Piedmontese opened fire from five field guns in the centre of their position, and under this bombardment the allied column lost its order. It was misty, and Charles Emmanuel countermanded the pursuit which he had ordered on first realizing that the enemy was retreating. Large numbers of French and Spaniards slipped away and deserted. That day the army went no farther than its old camp at Chianale. During the night there was a fall of snow, which made extremely difficult the transport of the sick and wounded along the mule tracks to the Cols, which are 4,000 feet above Chianale. The snowfall continued, and the army remained at Chianale till the morning of the 12th. Many of the sick and wounded died; the baggage trains and field guns were abandoned, and for thirty-six hours the columns trailed their weary length through the snow to St. Veran and Château Queyras. On the 14th the French, and on the 15th the Spaniards, set out on the march back to Guillestre. The French troops were sent to billets at Briançon, Embrun, Guillestre, and Mont Dauphin.

[1] Between Chianale and Castello.

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The Spanish troops marched by easy stages through Embrun, Gap, Corps, and Grenoble to Savoy, where they were put into winter quarters. The losses during the brief campaign had been heavy. Besides the killed and wounded, and those who died of cold or were crippled by frost-bite, between four and five thousand men had deserted. On the 21st of November the Spanish troops in Savoy numbered only 14,412 men including the sick.

The Piedmontese army had lost 30 officers and men killed, and 174 wounded. Charles Emmanuel had made no attempt at pursuit because he still hoped that Louis XV might refrain from taking any more active part against him, and therefore he still respected French territory.

In after years, Bourcet, than whom no one was in a better position to know, expressed the opinion that La Mina undertook this enterprise by order of his Government, without expecting that it would or could succeed, for the purpose of committing the French troops and forcing Louis XV to lend to Spain a much larger army in the following year. This purpose was accomplished. As a military enterprise, La Mina's attack must be unconditionally condemned. It was absurd, at the time of the normal beginning of the snow, to move an army into a valley in which the snow was certain to shut it up. It was equally absurd to deliver a frontal attack on one of the strongest conceivable positions without the most thoroughly prepared arrangements for a turning movement such as Bourcet had suggested, but La Mina had refused to adopt. The French, who understood all this, were furious with La Mina, and good relations between the two armies were never restored. The only excuse for La Mina is that he probably understood the character of Elizabeth Farnese, and knew that, unless he obeyed her orders, however absurd, he would be dismissed. His case is a typical example of one of the best ways of ruining an army and losing a war, as to which we have the very decided opinion of Napoleon.

'A commander-in-chief', wrote Napoleon, 'cannot plead in extenuation of a mistake in war the orders of his sovereign or

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of the minister who instructs him, when the authority giving the order is distant from the field of operations, and knows imperfectly, or not at all, the actual state of things on the spot. Any commander who undertakes to carry out a plan which he thinks bad is to blame. He ought to explain his reasons and to insist on the plan being changed, and to resign rather than be the means of ruining his army. Every commander-in-chief who, in obedience to a superior order, engages in a battle he knows he must lose is also to blame. He ought to refuse to obey, for a military order does not imply passive obedience except when given by a superior present in the theatre of war at the time, for in that case the superior knows the conditions, can hear the objections and can give any necessary explanations to him who has to carry out the order. If a commander-in-chief receives from his sovereign an absolute order to fight a battle and is instructed to get himself beaten, ought he to obey? No. If the general grasps the purpose of so strange an order, he ought to carry it out, but unless he does, he ought to refuse to obey.'

I have quoted Napoleon on this point because, in regard to such matters, he is probably considered the highest authority. The same opinion was expressed in perhaps more accurate and more maturely considered terms by Bourcet, who wrote:

'Plans of campaign are always settled at the court.' [It must be remembered that Bourcet's is an age of absolute monarchy, and that when he speaks of the Court, he means precisely what we mean by the Government.] 'They are contained in the instructions given by the king to the general commanding the army and are usually confined to the main purpose. They provide the means and leave to the general all that concerns the execution, merely giving him information on all those points in which policy may be concerned. It is for the general whom the king has chosen to make any necessary observations to the minister of war concerning the facilities or difficulties which may be met with in execution, but if he accepts the command, he becomes responsible for success, and ought not to start without *carte blanche* in regard to all the means of which he proposes to make use. If he is to find himself subject to fresh orders and if in every different circumstance he is bound to inform the court and to await its decision, it is impossible for him to guarantee anything, especially as the circumstances may change several times in the interim between the dispatch of his courier and the arrival of the reply, and as neither the king nor his minister can judge of the advantages or disadvantages of an operation at so great a distance, more often than not in a country which they do not know, and of which their idea is inadequate or incorrect.

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'If the king has confidence in the general, he ought to leave him free to make his own dispositions whatever they may be, provided they fulfil the purpose; if he has not confidence, it would be much better not to let the general start. This is one of the cases where personal considerations ought not to influence the choice, and where they would have disastrous effects. The command-in-chief of an army ought to be given to the most capable, the most experienced and the most vigorous of the senior general officers, and we may venture to say that he, too, ought to choose without any respect of persons those general officers who can serve his turn and carry out his plans. The king and the minister of war ought to entrust him with the choice of those whom he wishes to employ, because, as he must answer for success, it is for him to choose the means and the persons fit to help him. We may therefore conclude that any general who sets out from the court to go and command an army without having assured himself of entire freedom in his dispositions is liable to fail of the fulfilment of the king's purpose by delays in decision, and to dishonour himself by the failure of his campaign, perhaps through no fault of his own, whereas if he has *carte blanche*, the presumption is that he will not accept the command unless he is sure of success. Otherwise he would expose himself to the punishment deserved by an officer of his rank for undertaking without protest to carry out the plan of campaign contained in his instructions. There should be no escape from punishment, of which the fear ought to contribute, as much as the hope of a recompense, to arouse the general's vigour and zeal.'

One of the most frequent causes of disaster is the interference of governments in military operations for reasons which are not military but political. When a government finds that a campaign in one theatre of war has not been successful, it is tempted to order an attack in another theatre of war with no regard to the local conditions in that theatre, but simply to save its face. This is a great mistake, for the probability is that the operation so ordered will also fail, the government will be further discredited, and the prospect of winning the war will be more distant than ever. This is exactly what Elizabeth Farnese did when, having lost the battle of Campo Santo, and being furious with Charles Emmanuel, she gave her order for an attack through the Alps at a time when all those conversant with the Alpine theatre of war knew it was too late for a possible success.

Nothing could be more natural than Maria Theresa's

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wish to recover the kingdom of Naples. Its loss, when she was 17 years old, had closely touched her personal welfare, as it had led to the suggestion that she should abandon Duke Francis, the man of her heart, for Don Carlos, the son of her father's enemy. She could not but feel that it had been wrongfully taken from her father. Moreover, she thought that her allies, especially King George, who had urged her to give up Silesia to Frederick and a large strip of Lombardy to Charles Emmanuel, were bound to assist her in the acquisition of some territorial compensation for these sacrifices. The Treaty of Worms contained a British promise to give her such help, and also committed both her allies to the expulsion of the Bourbons from Italy. After the battle of Campo Santo she expected Traun with his victorious army to perfect his success by the pursuit of de Gages, which might well have ended with the conquest of Naples. She was therefore distressed when she heard that Charles Emmanuel refused to allow his troops to take part in the enterprise, and again, when in June all the Piedmontese troops, except five battalions left at Modena, Parma, and Piacenza, were recalled to the west for the defence of the Alpine frontier of Piedmont. She was particularly upset when she found that Traun considered that Charles Emmanuel was quite right in acting as he did. She had a high regard for Traun and left to herself would perhaps have trusted his judgement. But she was only 26, and was still disposed to rely upon her advisers, especially upon Bartenstein. They had long been pressing her to supersede Traun by the Prince of Lobkowitz, at this time serving under Prince Charles of Lorraine in Bohemia. Lobkowitz had none of Traun's ability, and owed his position to his family connexions. He was able to bring influence to bear on the members of the Queen's Council, most of whom took his side, and Prince Charles, who could not get on with him, was anxious to be rid of him, and therefore urged the Queen to send him to Italy.

In July 1743 Maria Theresa renewed her orders to Traun to take the offensive against Naples; Traun replied

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that without money and reinforcements he did not see his way to an offensive campaign, and begged to be relieved of his command. Thereupon Maria Theresa appointed Traun to be Commander-in-Chief in Moravia and Silesia, and Lobkowitz to be Governor of Milan and the other Italian Duchies, and Commander-in-Chief in Italy. In the middle of September Lobkowitz relieved Traun. His first step was to go and consult Charles Emmanuel, whom he found preparing to resist La Mina's attack, so that he could see for himself that it was idle to ask for Piedmontese troops to assist in an invasion of Naples.

The Spanish army was still quartered round Rimini. In October Lobkowitz crossed the Panaro, and encamped near Bologna. Three weeks later he began a cautious advance, and, when he learnt that de Gages had retreated to Pesaro, went on as far as Rimini. In these positions both the armies remained until March 1744.

In January 1744 Charles Emmanuel took formal possession of the territories ceded to him by Maria Theresa in the Treaty of Worms. His frontier now ran from the Lago Maggiore along the Ticino to its confluence with the Po, along the Po to the confluence of the Nura, and then along the Nura.

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V. 1744: CONTI TAKES NICE BUT NOT CUNEO

i. *Treaty of Fontainebleau. Battle of Toulon. De Gages retreats before Lobkowitz. Capture of Villefranche*

THE shuffling between peace and war, which was Fleury's legacy, came to an abrupt end when Louis XV found himself confronted by the Treaty of Worms and by the combination of England, Austria, Holland, and Sardinia. The great adventure in Germany and Bohemia, to which Belle Isle had committed him two years before, had completely failed and not a French soldier was left on German soil. The only result of two years' expenditure of lives and money had been the transfer of Silesia from Austria to Prussia, and Prussia had left Louis in the lurch. The troops he had lent to the Infant had merely taken part in a disaster. Even the security of Don Carlos at Naples was threatened. On hearing of the Treaty of Worms Louis wrote to Philip V:

'It is with the greatest grief that I send Your Majesty such disagreeable news, and I foresee all the keenness of your just resentment against so faithless a proceeding. I am bound to be the more annoyed because everything has passed through my hands, and because I have unfortunately been the channel that has been made use of to deceive you.'

He proposed a renewal of the alliance between the two Courts, and asked Philip at once to send instructions to the Spanish Ambassador, the Prince of Campo Florido, for the negotiation of a new treaty. For his own part Louis entrusted the negotiations to Maurepas, the Minister of Marine, who had long been intimate with Campo Florido, more intimate indeed than was consistent either with the interests of France or with loyalty to his master.[1] Under

[1] See Baudrillart, v, p. 180.

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the influence of Maurepas, Louis agreed to all the Spanish proposals except those for the acquisition by the Infant of Savoy (which he rejected because it would involve giving Charles Emmanuel compensation in Italy when a general peace should be concluded), and of Tuscany, in exchange for which France had obtained Lorraine. The treaty, signed at Fontainebleau on October 25, 1743, was a fresh family compact by which Louis undertook to enter into the war against England and Austria, no longer as an auxiliary but as a principal, with the object of obtaining the Duchies of Milan, Parma, and Piacenza for the Infant, Don Philip, and of recovering Gibraltar and Minorca for Spain. He also guaranteed the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but agreed that Don Carlos should remain neutral. He undertook to reinforce the Infant's army with thirty-five battalions, thirty squadrons, and a due proportion of artillery, while the King of Spain promised to maintain that army at a strength of forty-eight battalions and thirty-eight squadrons. France was to recover from Sardinia the fortresses of Exilles and Fenestrelle, which had been ceded by the Treaty of Utrecht. In vain it was pointed out to Louis that merely to please the King of Spain he was committing himself to a great war in which no French interest was concerned. He was only too eager to please the King of Spain.

During the autumn of 1743 Louis carefully planned the operations of the coming year. He quite understood the preponderant part played by England in the coalition against a Bourbon ascendancy in Europe. The British navy was the chief obstacle to the execution of the Spanish designs in Italy. Accordingly the first blow was to be struck against England. Fleury had been in constant communication with the English and Scottish Jacobites and with the Pretender at Rome, and Louis now determined to send Prince Charles Edward with an expeditionary force of 10,000 men under the Maréchal de Saxe to be landed in England, where he was assured that there would be a general rising in favour of James III. The Brest fleet was to cover the passage of the transports from Dunkirk and

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also the landing. As surprise was essential to the success of this project, the expedition was to precede the declaration of war. In the Mediterranean the combined French and Spanish fleets of de Court and Navarro were to go out from Toulon to attack Mathews, and, if successful, to convoy to Italy part or the whole of the Infant's army. Accordingly the Infant's Spanish troops, which after the failure at Chianale had returned to Savoy, would march from Savoy to Provence, where they would be joined by a French army under the Prince of Conti, and these combined forces were to undertake the capture of Villefranche, of which the harbour was the naval base of the British fleet. Villefranche taken, the Infant's Spanish troops would there be embarked and sent by sea to join the army of de Gages, at this time quartered round Pesaro.

The chief stroke against Austria was to be delivered in the Austrian Netherlands, where Louis himself would take the field. The army in Alsace was to move to the assistance of the Elector of Bavaria. If possible, Frederick of Prussia was to be induced again to attack Maria Theresa.

On December 10, 1743, Louis wrote to Philip V to let him know of the proposed expedition to England, 'a project I have framed in the greatest secrecy for destroying at one blow at its foundations the league of the enemies of the House of Bourbon and of securing Your Majesty's designs on Italy which is to-day my chief aim'. He asked for a prompt answer expressing Philip's approval of the plan, as time pressed and the start ought not to be delayed beyond the 1st of January.

There were, however, delays, and the unauthorized departure of Prince Charles Edward from Rome, followed by his landing at Antibes on January 23, gave the alarm to the British Government. Accordingly the French Admirals in the Channel found a superior English fleet under Admiral Norris ready to meet them. A number of transports on which the troops had been embarked at Dunkirk were driven ashore by a great storm and the expedition was abandoned. Its only result was that the

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British Government kept at home troops that might have been sent to Flanders and brought several thousand Dutch troops to England.

Equally unfortunate was the attempt to deal with the British fleet in the Mediterranean. In December 1743 Admiral Mathews went to Turin to consider the coming campaign in conference with Charles Emmanuel, Ormea, and the Austrian Ambassador, Kaunitz. It was known to them that the Infant's army would be strongly reinforced, so that Charles Emmanuel would certainly be unable to send troops to Lobkowitz, and that the Franco-Spanish attack would be directed against the harbour of Villefranche. The King was anxious that Mathews should assist in the defence of that harbour, and if need be in the withdrawal of its garrison. This Mathews agreed to do. It was also known that the French and Spanish fleets in Toulon were preparing to put to sea, and, as the English Admiral's first business was to fight them if they should come out, he could not afford to send any ships to co-operate with the Austrian attack upon Naples. On the 20th of January, 1744, Mathews returned to Villefranche. He had landed guns to strengthen the defences of the place and lent its commander a number of marines. He now arranged for the embarkation of the garrison in case it should have to retreat. On January 27 he sailed to join his fleet at Hyères. At the end of January he had news that the Brest fleet had put to sea on the 26th, and that its destination might be the Mediterranean. His instructions laid stress on his protecting the dominions of the King's allies in Italy and preventing the Spanish troops from reaching them by sea.

On February 8/19[1] the French and Spanish squadrons, together 28 ships, came out from Toulon, and during the next two days Mathews with 33 put to sea from Hyères Roads. On the evening of 10/21, when the two fleets bore to for the night, that of the Allies formed a line from north to south, the French fleet leading. The English

[1] The dates are here given in both old and new styles. Elsewhere, as a rule, the new style only is given.

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van and centre, respectively under Rowley and Mathews, were six and four miles eastward of the enemy, the rear division under Lestock several miles to the north-east of the centre.

The Admiralty regulations embodied in fighting instructions assumed a normal or pattern form of battle. A British commander was supposed to place his fleet alongside the enemy's fleet so that from van to rear each ship should engage the corresponding ship of the enemy. Mathews intended to carry out this programme and, when on the evening of the 10th he signalled the order to bring to for the night, he expected the van and rear divisions to come up into the prolongation of his own line before bringing to; with this object he kept up the signal for line abreast. But Lestock with the rear division brought to where he was, several miles in rear and to the east of the centre. Lestock thought he had previously been badly treated by Mathews and had a grudge against him, and beyond doubt failed to give him the loyal support and the obedience which duty required.

Next morning, February 11/22, the wind being easterly, the allied fleet, sailing southward in line ahead, the French leading, was about three miles distant from the British centre. The British van under Rowley was a mile to windward of the centre, and the rear under Lestock was seven or eight miles behind and to windward of the centre. The divisions were all in line abreast and Mathews directed them with a view to bringing the whole fleet level with and parallel to the French fleet. He repeatedly ordered Lestock to make more sail in order to reduce the great distance between the centre and rear divisions. Lestock, however, failed to obey these orders.

The allied fleet, fresh from its own harbour, had its ships clean and was a little faster than the British fleet, which had been long at sea. As the morning advanced Mathews saw that it was impracticable to carry out his attack according to the Admiralty pattern. At 10 o'clock he hoisted the signal for line ahead, his line being then about

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three miles distant from the parallel allied line, Lestock with the rear division still some three miles behind and nearly a mile to windward. Mathews, in order to attack, must turn his ships' heads together towards the west and while he was covering the three miles which separated them from the Allies, the Allies would be moving the same distance to the south. His leading ship, therefore, instead of coming upon the leading enemy ship would meet the sixth or seventh ship behind it, leaving a large part of the enemy's van unengaged. It was vital for him to attack the Allies before they could be reinforced by the Brest fleet. He had every reason to believe that their object was either to draw him on until they were thus reinforced or to entice him away from the coast in order to enable the Spanish army to be transported to Italy, as had happened during Haddock's command. They certainly aimed at the second of these results.

At 11 o'clock Haddock quite rightly determined to attack, though the normal pattern could not be adopted. He made the signal to engage, whereupon the centre and the greater part of the van bore down upon the enemy, Mathews engaging the Spanish flag-ship and Rowley the rear ships of the French squadron, while Rowley's three leading ships kept on their course to the south in order to prevent the French van from turning and going to the help of the engaged Spanish rear. Lestock's division was far behind and when it came up some hours later did not engage the Spanish rear. By half-past four the Spanish fleet was in sorry plight. The flag-ship had been very roughly handled by Mathews, though she had escaped destruction by sinking a fire-ship sent against her. Hawke had taken one Spanish ship, another was disabled, and three others had been obliged to leave the line and to make the best of their way to Spanish ports. At this moment the French Admiral caused his ships to tack together and turn northward to assist the Spaniards. The captured ship was recaptured and the flag-ship saved. The Spanish fleet then also turned northward. Mathews thereupon turned all his ships northward to prevent the

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enemy returning to Toulon. Night coming on the engagement was suspended.

Next day the enemy made off to the westward and Mathews followed. The captured and re-captured Spanish ship was again taken and this time burned, but Mathews was unable to gain upon the retreating enemy. On the third day, February 13/24, the enemy at dawn was still visible from the mast-head and the chase was resumed, but after a couple of hours Mathews gave it up. He found that his fleet as a whole was slower than the enemy, therefore that he would be unable to catch them though they might have to abandon the damaged Spanish flag-ship. He thought it of supreme importance that he should return to the Riviera in time to prevent any movement of Spanish transports. He made for Rosas Bay, where he found no enemy ships, but was prevented by heavy gales from reaching the Riviera. He put in to Port Mahon, where he was detained by the weather and was unable to return to the Riviera till the end of March, though in February he sent three ships to San Tropez, where they blockaded fourteen Spanish transports preparing to take troops to Monaco.

The battle of Toulon caused heart-burnings on both sides. There was great dissatisfaction in England and recrimination between Mathews and Lestock. Two years afterwards came a series of courts martial by which Mathews and several captains were cashiered and Lestock acquitted.

Admiral Richmond's invaluable account of the battle and of the subsequent trials leaves no room for doubt that Lestock's behaviour was disgraceful, and that he ought to have been cashiered if not shot, but I am unable to accept Admiral Richmond's view that Mathew was to blame for not continuing the pursuit on the 13/24. Admiral Richmond rightly says 'that the destruction of the enemy's fleet is the best means of achieving the ends in war'; he may also be right in thinking that, as on the 14/25 the Spanish and French parted company, Mathews, if he had continued the pursuit, would have come up with one or the other of the

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allied squadrons and probably destroyed it. But on the 13/24 Mathews could not possibly know this, and I think his decision must be judged in the light of what he knew at the time. If, as he thought probable, he had come upon the Allies together with the Brest fleet, the result might well have been disastrous, and if, on returning to the Riviera, he had found that the Spanish army had been transported to Italy he would have been held to have disobeyed his instructions. His attack on the 11/22 seems to me to have been an anticipation of Nelson's attack at Trafalgar, the difference being that Lestock was not Collingwood. No doubt Nelson had explained his plan in advance, but it was impossible for Mathews to explain in advance a plan which was improvised in a situation which he could not have foreseen. It is intelligible that he did not give his confidence to Lestock, whom he judged to be incapable. In any case, Mathews' victory was so far decisive that the French and Spanish fleets did not again venture to face the British during the war, and neither Power was able to transport an army by sea to Italy, though now and then one or two transports escaped capture.

The quarrel between Mathews and Lestock hardly affected the subsequent course of the war, but the friction between the French and the Spanish had serious consequences. The Spaniards on reaching Cartagena quite unjustly blamed the French admiral for not having taken his proper share of the fighting. King Philip created Navarro Marquis de la Victoria, while Louis XV, in complaisance to his uncle, called upon de Court to justify his conduct and banished him to his country house. Yet from this time on Philip and Elizabeth could never get rid of the suspicion that Louis XV was playing them false. This mistrust of the French was freely expressed in all the letters of Elizabeth to the Infant Don Philip and in all the secret instructions of Philip V to La Mina. The relations between the two armies were henceforth tinged with suspicion, which was intensified by the haughty uncompromising attitude of La Mina, who made difficulties

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at every turn. In this he was simply obeying his instructions, but as he never disclosed this fact, his obstruction was attributed by the French to his disagreeable character.

The suspicion with which Elizabeth Farnese regarded the policy of France, intelligible enough in the light of her long experience of the duplicity of Fleury, was not justified by the conduct of Louis XV in the first years after Fleury's death. He was sincerely anxious to help his uncle the King of Spain. The maintenance of Don Carlos in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies was an essential part of his policy, and he was determined to procure an Italian principality for his son-in-law Don Philip. He did not, however, share Elizabeth's animosity against Charles Emmanuel, and never gave up the idea that the King of Sardinia might be induced to come to terms. But Elizabeth, having once acquired the habit of suspicion, saw fresh grounds for it in everything which she did not understand, and, having little insight into the considerations that govern the conduct of armies, was confirmed by every objection raised to her plans in the belief that the French were playing her false. This unfortunate attitude and the too great anxiety of Louis to avoid giving offence to Elizabeth were to have a disastrous effect upon the fortunes of the war in Italy.

In 1743, Louis now 33 years old, was at his best. He was intelligent, was attending to his policy and to the war, and was urged by Maréchal de Noailles, by the Cardinal de Tencin, and by Madame de Chateauroux to emulate the policy of his great-grandfather. That he had no vocation for the labours of government, was too soon to grow tired of them, and to fall a prey to the allurements of pleasure are considerations that belong to a later period and ought not to affect the historian's judgement of the time with which we are now dealing.

The problem of the conduct of the war in Italy was far from easy. Events had made plain to both Courts the impracticability of sending an army by sea to Italy so long as the British fleet in the Mediterranean was superior to the combined fleets of France and Spain. The girdle

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of mountains which surrounds Piedmont was a tremendous obstacle to the invasion of Italy now that the frontier was formed by the crest-line of the Alps. Along the whole circuit from Mont Blanc to the Col di Tenda the passes are closed by deep snow from the beginning of October to the end of June. Those most frequented can indeed be crossed by small parties, but serious military operations are out of the question except in the months of July, August, and September. The Riviera between Nice and Genoa was a roadless defile, avoided whenever possible by travellers. It was blocked by Genoese fortresses at Ventimiglia, Finale, and Savona. It was Genoese territory and therefore neutral, and was separated from Piedmont by a rugged belt of mountains twenty miles across. The issues from all the principal routes through the Alps and Apennines were guarded by Piedmontese fortresses, and Charles Emmanuel, with an excellent army of some 50,000 men, was in these geographical conditions a formidable adversary. No doubt the barrier of snow which protected Piedmont made it impossible for Charles Emmanuel to defend Savoy, from which he was cut off except in the summer.

The county of Nice was also cut off from Piedmont during the winter by the snow-clad Maritime Alps. To occupy this county would be to increase the pressure already brought against Charles Emmanuel by the occupation of Savoy, but it would be a difficult operation, for Charles Emmanuel had fortified the hills which surround and dominate the harbour of Villefranche, and to attack this fortified position would be a serious business. The harbour was used by the British fleet as the base of its operations on the coast, so that its capture, while it would embarrass the British, would provide a convenient place of embarkation for any troops the Allies might send by sea to Italy.

In November 1743 Louis sent to the Spanish Court a plan of campaign in which he proposed that Conti and the Infant should undertake the capture of Villefranche, where, after the hoped-for defeat of Admiral Mathews, the Spanish

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troops should be embarked and sent by sea to join the army of de Gages, at this time quartered round Pesaro, facing Lobkowitz, who had advanced to Rimini. The Spanish reply, dated December 10, 1743, suggested that, as it was doubtful whether the combined fleets would be able to defeat Mathews, and therefore whether the transport of troops by sea would be practicable, it would be better, after the capture of Villefranche, for the allied army to march along the Riviera to Genoa and thence by Piacenza to Lombardy. The Prince of Conti, whom Louis had selected for the command of the army, though only twenty-seven, was uncommonly intelligent; he had served with real distinction in the late campaigns in Germany. At this time he was studying the projected operations in conjunction with the Comte d'Argenson, the Minister of War, and was no doubt consulted regarding the instructions with which he was supplied.

After sending to Paris his modified plan of campaign, Philip V sent orders to La Mina to take his army from Savoy to Provence, and La Mina began to set his troops on the road without concerting their routes with the French local authorities who would have to find them billets and supplies.

On the 19th of January Bourcet wrote, apparently from Château Dauphin, to the Comte d'Argenson, Minister of War:[1]

'I arrived yesterday from Chambéry, where I left Monsieur le Marquis de la Mina, who was intending to order the two first battalions of his army to march off on the 20th inst. for Dauphiné and to continue their route to Provence. The General gave me to understand that he was about to undertake operations against Nice and Villefranche. This plan could have no other object than either to get possession of the range of mountains on which is the Col di Tenda, with a view to a diversion into the southern part of the plain of Piedmont, or to prepare for a march along the Riviera to Genoa and thence to Piacenza and Parma. The execution of this plan would perhaps meet with many difficulties both by sea and land, and in case it should be less successful than is hoped, allow me to submit to you some reflections upon

[1] 'Mémoire historique de la Campagne de 1743 par Bourcet.' MS. in the archives of the Ministry of War, Paris.

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the subject. As it is impracticable to operate on the frontiers of Dauphiné before the end of June by reason of the great quantity of snow which covers the mountains, I find that the attempt upon the county of Nice will very suitably employ the months of March, April, and May. But as there is some doubt about the success of this enterprise, I think it would be convenient to prepare a plan for acting offensively by one of the outlets of this frontier. They may be reduced to three, viz.: (1) the valley of Susa for the siege of Exilles; (2) the valley of Castel Delfino; (3) the valley of the Stura and the sieges of Demonte and Cuneo by the valley of Barcelonnette.'

Bourcet goes on to suggest that, with a view to being able to operate by any of the three routes named, it would be advisable to send the artillery and ammunition in advance to Mont Dauphin, where they would be within reach of each of the three valleys named, and where their assembly would not reveal the proposed direction of the operations. He also suggests that corn and forage should be accumulated at various points along the frontier, in order that, in case a retreat should become necessary, no delay would be caused by lack of supplies. He ends by offering to go to Versailles to talk over the plans with d'Argenson. D'Argenson showed Bourcet's letter to Conti, and both of them wrote to Bourcet in terms which showed that his plan was appreciated. Conti agreed that supplies ought at once to be collected, though he thought Gap and Lesdiguières would be better sites for the stores than Mont Dauphin, where their collection would attract the King of Sardinia's attention to the Val Varaita. Bourcet need not come to Versailles as the Prince would shortly leave for the army and could see him there.

Bourcet's plan was adopted. The King's instructions given to Conti in February were:

'The first object agreed upon with the Spanish Court is the conquest of the county of Nice. If the combined fleets are able to set free the sea this enterprise is to be pushed on by all practicable means. If not, it must be attempted by land. The Var must be crossed, Nice occupied, and the entrenchments which cover Villefranche must be attacked. In case of success the Prince is to garrison these forts with French troops and to bring the rest of his own army back across the Var; to leave in Provence those troops needed for coast defence and to billet the rest in Languedoc.

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If the Infant wishes to send a detachment to the help of M. de Gages the Prince is not to object but he must send no French troops. French troops are not to advance into the enemy's country unless they can do it from point to point without losing their communications.

Whether the conquest of Nice succeeds or not, so soon as the troops are in billets the Prince is to plan the operations of the combined armies for the period after the disappearance of the snow. The King's intention is to penetrate into Piedmont. The Prince is to consider with the Infant the plan he thinks most suitable. The King would much like him to undertake the siege of Cuneo, the valley of the Stura being thought the most practicable though barred by the fortress of Demonte. . . . The essential purpose is to secure at the issue from the mountains a fortified depot to cover the communications with Dauphiné and to serve as a base for further operations in Piedmont.'

The Prince of Conti arrived at Aix on March 14 and there found the Infant and General La Mina as well as his own staff, in which the Comte de Maillebois (son of Maréchal Maillebois) was quartermaster-general, and Bourcet assistant quartermaster-general (*aide-maréchal général des logis*). The fact that Bourcet was authorized and expected to correspond with the Minister of War shows that he had a quite exceptional position out of proportion to his rank, which was only that of a seconded captain of the infantry regiment Royal Vaisseau.

La Mina's instructions dated January 15 were to the effect that, after the conquest of the county of Nice, he was to induce the French army to march with him into Italy to join de Gages. Even if the combined fleets should be defeated, the march along the coast was the best plan, for, us soon as the combined armies should enter Genoese territory, Genoa would declare herself on the side of the Bourbons and the difficulty regarding the communications of the army would thereby be removed.

Before the two Courts had fully realized the failure of their naval campaign, and while the armies were still on the march to Provence, came news which filled them with anxiety for the fate of Don Carlos.

During the winter Maria Theresa, whose heart was still set on the recovery of Naples, tried to persuade Admiral Mathews to help her with his fleet, and Charles Emmanuel

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to lend troops to Lobkowitz, proposals to which neither of them could reasonably agree. But she reinforced Lobkowitz at Rimini with 7,000 men, bringing his army to a strength of 20,000 combatants, while de Gages at Pesaro had only 13,000. Further reinforcements from Croatia were on the march to join Lobkowitz, whose instructions clearly defined his mission, to attack de Gages and to invade the kingdom of Naples, but left him a free hand as to his mode of procedure. De Gages had fortified a strong position at Pesaro between the mountains and the sea. When he knew that Lobkowitz had been reinforced he asked Don Carlos to send him a contingent of the Neapolitan army. But the Treaty of Fontainebleau had assumed the neutrality of Don Carlos, which his mother was anxious that he should maintain, and he had a vivid recollection of the visit of Commodore Martin to Naples. He refused to reinforce de Gages, who, finding himself in a difficult situation, took the written opinion of all his generals. The majority of them thought that the Austrians were strong enough not only to attack the position in front but also to turn it by moving through the mountains, and that the British men-of-war in the Adriatic would probably land troops on the coast behind them and destroy the bridges by which they must retreat. In that case the destruction of the army was certain and the loss of the kingdom of Naples must follow. A retreat begun in time would draw the Austrians after them and away from Lombardy and thus prevent Lobkowitz from assisting Charles Emmanuel, who unaided would hardly be able to resist the army of the Infant. De Gages thought this a sound view of the situation, but decided not to retreat prematurely, especially as he had collected abundant supplies at Pesaro which it was better to eat up than to destroy.

The unenterprising Lobkowitz sat still at Rimini until the beginning of March, when he was led to believe that Neapolitan troops were moving to reinforce de Gages. He saw that he must attack de Gages before their arrival, so he assembled his army on the 7th in front of Rimini with the advance guard at Cattolica. De Gages, well

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informed of the enemy's doings, set off the same day and marched down the coast, 105 miles in 11 days, crossing the Tronto, which was the Neapolitan frontier, and halting at Atri, where he encamped.[1] Lobkowitz, who might by an energetic pursuit have ruined the Spanish army, followed slowly, though his advance guard under Browne, a good general, more than once gave the Spanish rear-guard a hard time. Browne reached the Tronto on the 19th, three days after de Gages had crossed that river, and on the 18th Lobkowitz with his main body reached Fermo, where he halted and sent to Vienna for instructions and for money.

The unexpected and rapid retreat of de Gages alarmed Don Carlos, who, expecting to remain neutral, had his army on a peace footing; but once he had admitted the Spanish army into his territory there was an end of neutrality. Disaffection was rife and he feared a rising in favour of the Austrians. However, he faced the situation. He sent his family for safety to the fortress of Gaeta, called out all his army, brought over as many troops as he could from Sicily, and assembled his main body at Capua with detachments on the Tronto and at Cassino, on the main road from Capua towards Rome. He set off with his main body from Capua to reinforce de Gages, and marching through Venafro and Isernia reached Castel di Sangro on the 1st of April. Here he learned that Lobkowitz was more likely to march to his right towards Rome than to attack de Gages. Accordingly he moved to his left to the Lago Fucino, where in the first week of April he encamped and waited for Lobkowitz to move. At the Lago Fucino he was near enough to de Gages at Atri to be sure that their forces could be united before Lobkowitz could reach them, and he could always be before the Austrians on any of the roads between Rome and Naples.

The situation of Don Carlos lay heavy on the minds of Elizabeth Farnese and of Louis XV. Elizabeth not only wanted to help her eldest son; she was eager to see Don Philip established at Milan. She was sure that

[1] See map, p. 44.

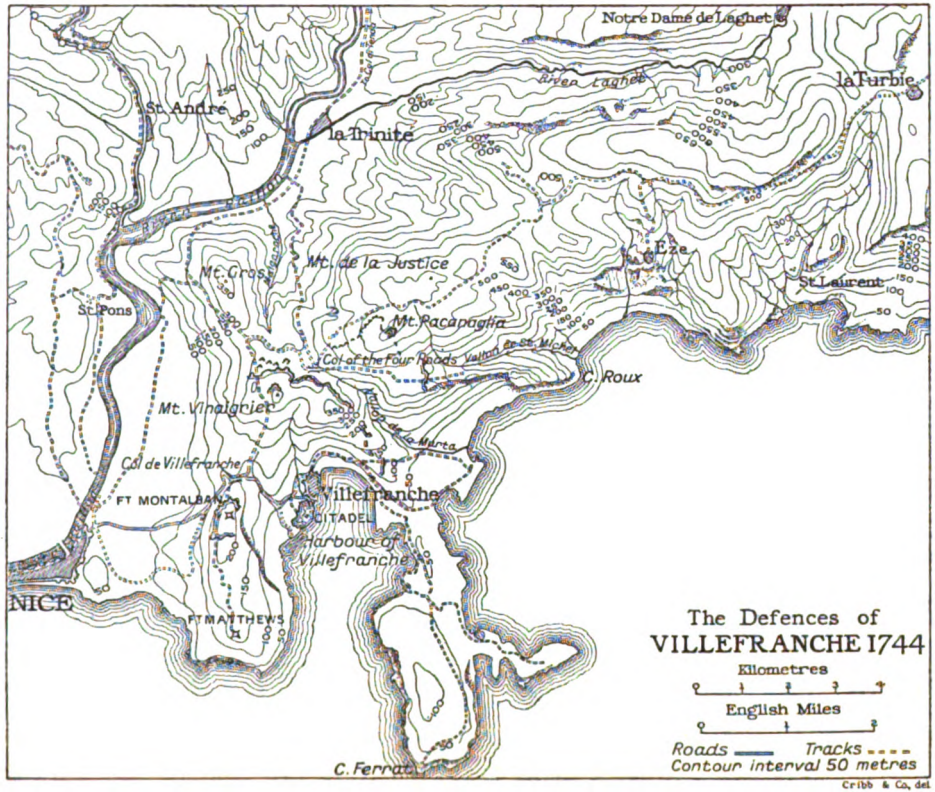
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to send her army to Milan would be to accomplish both purposes; it would bring back Lobkowitz and would secure Don Philip in possession of the territory promised him by the Treaty of Fontainebleau. She was distressed by the declaration of Louis XV that his army must not advance into Italy unless it could secure its communications with France. 'The King of France', she said to the French Ambassador Vaureal, Bishop of Rennes, on March 27, 'is master of his own troops. But there is nothing to prevent us from sending on our troops and risking everything rather than expose de Gages' army and our son to certain ruin.' On March 30 Philip V sent orders to La Mina that after the capture of Villefranche he must adhere to the plan of entering Piedmont from the Riviera of Genoa, and wrote to Louis XV asking him to send a separate army to besiege Cuneo without taking troops from the army at Nice, otherwise months would be lost over the siege and the armies would not be able to invade Italy that year.

This difference of view as to the means of obtaining the objects on which the two courts were equally set was embarrassing both for Conti and for La Mina. They agreed to proceed with the operation against Villefranche and the county of Nice, and to leave open the question of the subsequent moves.

The troops were ordered to assemble on the 26th of March, the Spaniards at Cagnes and the French at Grasse, ready to cross the Var. The Spaniards were given the post of honour on the right because Louis XV insisted that his troops were but auxiliaries of the Spaniards, this being consistent with his idea of ultimately inducing Charles Emmanuel to change sides. The Infant had altogether 44 battalions, 137 squadrons, and Conti 36 battalions and 134 squadrons; the grand total of all these forces was about 46,000 men. The cavalry was left in Languedoc as the hilly county of Nice was unsuitable for its action. La Mina had left in Savoy 3 Spanish battalions, some 600 Swiss infantry, and a few squadrons. Conti sent 5 of his battalions to Dauphiné and stationed 2 in Provence and 2

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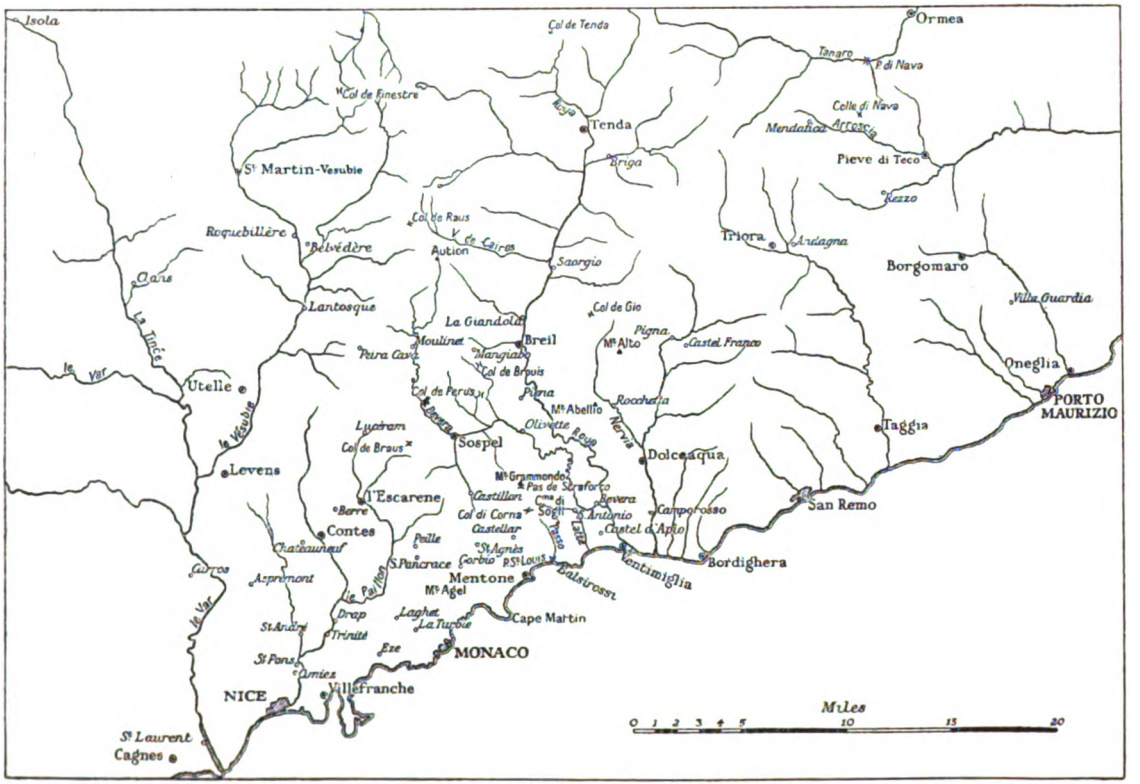
in Languedoc as coastguards. One French battalion was at Monaco, that principality having been for a century under French protection with a French garrison. These deductions made, the army that reached the Var consisted of 30,000 infantry, half French (26 battalions) and half Spanish (41 battalions), with a battalion of French artillery. Conti proposed to embark a detachment at Antibes to be landed at Monaco so as to turn the defences of Villefranche. But when he reached Antibes on March 23 the defeat of the combined fleet was known and some of Mathews' ships were off the coast, so that the embarkation had to be abandoned.

The entrenchments which protected the harbour of Villefranche covered the end of a great mountain ridge between the river Paillon and the sea, a ridge which runs up without a break to one of the great spurs of the Maritime Alps. Mont Pacanaglia, only a mile and a quarter from Villefranche, is 1,800 feet above the sea, and Mont Gros, overlooking the bend of the Paillon, 1,000 feet above that river. Entrenchments placed on these heights were not likely to be easily stormed, and it would be extremely difficult to bring artillery to any position from which they could be battered.

The works were garrisoned by fourteen Piedmontese battalions and a thousand marines from the British fleet, a total force of some 7,000 men, under the command of the Marquis of Susa, a natural son of Victor Amadeus II. A smaller Piedmontese force of six battalions, 3,000 men, under the Marquis Pallavicini, was at Sospel, 26 miles from Nice, on the road to Cuneo, which is 86 miles from Nice. At Cuneo there were three more battalions. Pallavicini's mission was, if possible, to attack any force which might attempt to surround the fortified camp of Villefranche. The difficulty of employing artillery prohibited the normal operations of a siege. The attack would have to be by assault without artillery preparation, but it must be preceded by investment, which must be covered against Pallavicini's possible attacks.

Accordingly, before beginning his advance, Conti sent a

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The county of Nice and part of the Riviera.

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brigade of four battalions to Entrevaux to cross the Var to Utelle while the main body should cross at St. Laurent. The movement was fixed for the 1st of April, and on that day the advance guard passed the Var unopposed, and next day was followed by the whole army; the Var was then bridged near St. Laurent. The municipality of Nice at once sent the keys of the city to the Infant. After two days devoted to reconnaissance the army moved forward to Nice, and occupied the right bank of the Paillon as far as its bend. Parties of the brigade from Entrevaux occupied Levens, Clans, Utelle, Chateauneuf, L'Escarène, and Luceram. On the 9th of April Castelar, with fourteen battalions, crossed the Paillon at Trinité and marched to Peille. Pallavicini, fearing to be turned, retreated from Sospel over the Col de Brouis to Breil and Saorgio; thereupon Castelar sent a detachment to occupy Castillon and marched on the 11th of April with his main body to Laghet. A Piedmontese battalion belonging to the garrison of Villefranche had been stationed at La Turbie, but on Castelar's approach it had withdrawn to Eze, whereupon Montcalm, with his French battalion from Monaco, occupied La Turbie. Next day Castelar moved forward along the hills towards the defences of Villefranche to which the Piedmontese battalion retired.

The fortified area was now surrounded and cut off from Pallavicini's force, and arrangements were made for all the troops to move on the evening of the next day, the 13th, into the positions from which at dawn on the 14th they were to deliver the assault. But on the morning of the 12th the British fleet appeared off the coast and Conti called a council of war, to which he put the question whether it would not be better to move the troops that same evening and attack on the 13th, before the English could land reinforcements for the Piedmontese. The generals thought that this would be a mistake as it would not give time for completing the necessary arrangements for the movement of the several columns. Accordingly, on the evening of the 13th the troops moved to their posts, but on the morning of the 14th when the advance guards

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had already crossed the Paillon, a great storm suddenly swelled that stream so rapidly that a great many men were drowned and the advance guards of two of the columns cut off. The Piedmontese, however, did not molest them, and they were safely withdrawn that evening. The attack had to be postponed.

Charles Emmanuel, dissatisfied with Pallavicini's retreat, sent General Della Rocca to take over the command of his troops reinforced by the three battalions from Cuneo. On the 14th Della Rocca advanced with part of his force towards L'Escarène and with the other part towards Castillon, but he did not feel strong enough to make a serious attack upon the very superior forces of the Allies.

On the 18th of April Mathews, off the coast near San Remo, received an urgent message from the Marquis of Susa asking for help. He therefore went ashore at Villefranche to confer with the Piedmontese commander. With a southerly wind he could not risk taking his ships into harbour, but completed the arrangements for transporting Piedmontese troops in case of need, and brought seven ships near the shore to cover the operation with their guns.

The Piedmontese works had been very carefully designed and constructed. A cart-road from Nice to Villefranche crossed the long spur that separates the harbour of Villefranche from the Paillon. On this spur south of the road was the small fort of Mont Alban. At the seaward end of the spur had been made another work called Fort Mathews, after the Admiral. Along the 600 yards between these two a trench had been dug, in which were batteries so placed as to cross their fire over the ground in front which they commanded. There was also a battery on either side of the road from Nice to Villefranche.

To the right of these batteries the much higher ground of Mont Vinaigrier had trenches along its northern face with a series of batteries which also swept with a cross fire the ground in front of them, that is, the summit of Mont Gros and the ravine of Malgarache as well as the Col of the Four Roads. Farther to the right Mont Pacanaglia

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was defended on its summit by a redoubt called Colimaçon (the Snail), from which a line of works ran due south across the road from Eze and another line westwards to the Col of the Four Roads.

Conti determined to deliver his postponed attack on the 20th of April, moving the troops to their starting-points on the evening of the 19th. Twelve battalions posted near Laghet guarded the attacking columns against possible interference by Della Rocca. Forty-six battalions were told off for the attack. These were formed into six assaulting columns and a reserve. Three of the columns were to attack from Nice the spur which protects Villefranche. The attack of these first three columns was meant to be merely a demonstration to draw away the Piedmontese from the works farther north, and especially from the Snail, which was the commanding position.

Of the next two which started from St. Pons and St. André, one was to attack the Mont Gros from the west and the other going by the ravine of Malgarache (to the east of Mont Gros) to attack from the north the works on Mont Vinaigrier. The sixth column, 18 battalions under Castelar, collected near Eze, was to march from there towards the Mont de la Justice, one party round its northern slope to the Col of the Four Roads, the next along its summit to assault the Snail, and the third along its southern side against the trenches that ran southwards from the Snail.

The right columns began their demonstration about midnight on the 19th. The general attack was to begin by a rocket signal at 3 a.m. The two right-hand columns demonstrated so effectually that, though they did not take the forts on the spur, they took the two redoubts beside the road and reached the Col of Villefranche, and as they came from different directions, drove in, surrounded, and captured most of the troops of five Piedmontese battalions, and the commanding general, the Marquis de Susa. The reserve was then moved to their support. The third column mistook its direction and made its way on to the Mont Gros, where it came upon the fourth and fifth, so that

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all three were mixed up and suffered a great deal from the fire of the works on Mont Vinaigrier. They were joined by Castelar's right party, as was intended, but all their attacks on Mont Vinaigrier were repulsed with heavy loss and they had to fall back down to the Paillon. Castelar's left party, advancing along the southern seaward slope of the mountain, was also stopped by the trenches, but his centre party, moving along the summit of the hill, stormed and took the Snail, which commanded all the defences. As he had no guns, his commanding position was at the moment of no use to him. He sent to ask for guns and began to build a battery. Meanwhile, Cinsan, the Piedmontese second in command, collected enough troops to make a counter-attack on the allied right at the Col of Villefranche and drove the victorious columns back in disorder to Nice. Conti's dispatch written the same evening reported that his attack had been repulsed with heavy loss.

While Conti was writing his dispatch the Piedmontese generals held a council of war. They had had a good many killed and wounded, and five battalions were missing. They had barely 5,000 men left. They were cut off from Piedmont, and decided that the wisest plan was to escape while they could. So, with the assistance of Mathews, they embarked their troops on 33 transports and were escorted by the British fleet to Oneglia, a Piedmontese port, forming part of a Piedmontese *enclave* in Genoese territory.

On the 22nd the Allies discovered that the entrenchments had been abandoned and occupied them without opposition. Three days later the fort of Mont Alban surrendered and two days afterwards the castle of Villefranche.

Ritter von Hoen, the author of the admirably accurate Austrian history of the war, finds it inexplicable that 'Charles Emmanuel looked on inactive at this struggle and made no attempt to save Villefranche'. But the reason is made plain by an examination of the topography of the district. There were only two ways from Villefranche to Piedmont. One by the Col de Fenêtre 8,000

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feet high, the other by the Col di Tenda 6,100 feet high. To the first the way was by the valley of the Vésubie, occupied by the French as soon as they crossed the Var. The other was by L'Escarène and Sospel. Between L'Escarène and Sospel is a high ridge crossed by the mule-track (there was no cart-road) at the Col di Braus, 3,000 feet high. From Sospel the track led over the Col de Brouis to La Giandola. There the track entered a gorge nearly three miles long in which the Roya flows between two perpendicular walls of rock and the path was laid on arches built against the face of one of the precipices. The end of the gorge was commanded by the guns of the fort of Saorgio. From here the track follows a continuous defile to the Col di Tenda, snow-clad to the end of May. Charles Emmanuel had learned in Savoy what it meant to retreat across a snow-clad pass and was not likely to risk a similar experience. Any force acting as was Pallavicini's, had to be careful not to have its retreat to La Giandola cut off. That is why neither Pallavicini nor Della Rocca felt free to make any move which would uncover their retreat.

In any case, a French army strong enough to undertake the siege of Villefranche would begin by surrounding the place and after that the only retreat would be by sea. That is why Charles Emmanuel was at so much pains to induce Mathews to provide for the retreat of the garrison. And this is one of the considerations which must govern any judgement upon Mathews' decision to abandon the pursuit of the combined fleet.

ii. *Discordant Plans of France and Spain*

IMMEDIATELY after the occupation of Villefranche, La Mina, having again received orders from his Court to proceed by the coast route, proposed to move that way, and upon Conti's explaining the objections to this course, replied that if he received from his Court the order to throw his army into the sea he should carry it out without hesitation. He was at length induced by Conti to agree that their conflicting views should be submitted to the two

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kings, whose decision should be awaited. Meantime Conti agreed to the dispatch of a party of 500 men of both armies to occupy the Genoese town of Ventimiglia and to obtain supplies there. Conti prepared a scheme for billeting both armies, the Spanish troops to the east of the Paillon, the French to the west of it, so that, in case no agreement should be reached, the Spaniards could march off to Genoa and the French back to France without either set disturbing the other. Della Rocca's Piedmontese force was posted at Breil, and the Piedmontese troops withdrawn from Villefranche were entrenching themselves at Oneglia. It was thought necessary to cover the French and Spanish billeting areas against Della Rocca and any troops that might reinforce him from Tenda. Accordingly the Bailli de Givry with a strong detachment was sent to Sospel and General Villemur with a small one to Castillon. These moves were completed in the last week of April. At the same time the melting snow on the mountains flooded all the rivers and made the transport of supplies so difficult that any large movement was impracticable for the moment. In the absence of cart-roads supplies for the Spanish troops were sent to Monaco by boats that crept along the shore to evade the British men-of-war. Both Conti and d'Argenson had been convinced of the soundness of Bourcet's views of the plan of campaign, as is shown by their correspondence:

D'Argenson to Conti. Versailles, April 11.

'It is generally agreed that it is impracticable to march from Nice to Genoa, and that our only rational plan is to try to push through all the various cols which lead into Piedmont, and to make our way through the one where the Piedmontese forces prove weakest. We must therefore be ready to attack them at all points. The plan to collect supplies in Upper Dauphiné is therefore sound. But the Austrian attack on Naples is dangerous, and our success in Piedmont would not save Naples. Accordingly the Spaniards are eager to send help to de Gages. A memorandum from the Spanish court begins by assuming that we have conquered the county of Nice, and insists on the army marching through the defile from Nice to Genoa, and then pushing on directly to Piacenza. But it is not clear that all this if done would induce the Austrians to abandon their invasion of Naples.'

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Conti to d'Argenson. Villefranche, April 27.

'Supposing that we marched along the Riviera to Genoa and reached Tortona, we could not besiege Tortona, because it is impossible to take guns by the Riviera route, and the King of Sardinia would reoccupy the county of Nice, and so cut off all our communications. We must go through Piedmont, for we cannot secure our communications and supplies unless we get hold of a fortress, from which then we might move to Bobbio, and so to Lombardy.

There are only two obstacles which prevent the Queen of Spain from obtaining the Duchies she wants for Don Philip. One is the Piedmontese army, and the other the Austrian army now invading Naples. These are our two objectives, and if you can hit one of them, your blow is bound to affect the other.

I am very glad that the King is content with the pains I have taken to gain the confidence of the Infant. In this I have succeeded as between our two selves, but I have not yet been able to free him from his fear of his Court and his Governors. M. de la Mina on his side defers blindly to all the orders that come from Spain; he sometimes feels their weakness and absurdity, but is afraid of committing himself and staking his position. The fate of M. de Montemar and of M. de Glimes scares him so much that he dare not risk sharing it.

Conti to d'Argenson. April 29 (a week after the complete occupation of Villefranche).

'Beyond Ventimiglia, the roads are so bad that you cannot take even loaded mules. Our columns will be very long, and will be exposed to the guns of the British fleet, and to Piedmontese attacks on our flank and rear. Suppose we are able to pass along this route, we shall be unable without guns to take any fortress, and can therefore have no depot of supplies, while the Piedmontese can either retake the county of Nice behind us or invade Dauphiné.

I am reconnoitring Saorgio to see whether we can take it, for we ought to have a position which secures the region of Nice against a Piedmontese counter-stroke.'

Conti to d'Argenson. Villefranche, May 2.

In order to facilitate the decision of the Court on the course to be taken by the combined armies Conti encloses a memoir explaining the various plans between which a choice has to be made. They are:

'1. To complete and secure the conquest of Nice.
2. To penetrate into Lombardy by the Riviera of Genoa.
3. To take a position which, while covering the new conquest, would threaten the whole dominions of the King of Sardinia, and would admit of our taking the offensive as soon as the season will permit.

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4. In case the two armies should separate to take a position which would allow of defending the county of Nice and also covering the frontiers of the Kingdom.

1. The best way of securing the county of Nice would be to occupy Saorgio, but this is thought impracticable and the alternative is to send to Roquebillière in the valley of the Vésubie a force which, after the melting of the snow, can cross the Col de Raus (6,500 feet high) and come down to the valley of the Roya above Saorgio.

2. The objections to the movement by the Riviera, chiefly that the route is bad and that the communications cannot be secured, have been explained in previous papers.

3. If we are to be ready when the passes are clear of snow to invade Piedmont, we must now billet our troops over a large area from which when the time comes they can quickly be assembled at the points from which the operation would begin. The most promising line of attack would be the valley of the Stura. The troops should be quartered in the region between Nice and Briançon, the Spaniards having their first line stretching from Nice by Entraunes to Barcelonnette, and their second line behind the Var from the coast to Entrevaux. The French would have their right at Barcelonnette and their first line would run by Tournoux and Mont Dauphin to Briançon ; their second at Sisteron, Gap, Corps, La Mure, and Grenoble.

These positions would threaten the frontier of Piedmont from the sea to Savoy. It would be better to have only a small force in the county of Nice so as not to draw the enemy towards Cuneo, but the Spaniards are determined to remain in the County and not to return to France.

4. The French army, if the Spaniards leave it, is not strong enough to defend the whole line from Savoy to Nice. We might secure the centre by putting garrisons at Briançon, Mont Dauphin, Embrun, Colmars, and Entrevaux, and the county of Nice by posting the rest of the French army between Entrevaux and Nice, where it would cover Provence.

This arrangement leaves Savoy unprotected, but after all the King of Sardinia cannot hold Savoy during the winter. We should have to keep garrisons at Montmélian and Fort Barraux and to see that the defences of Grenoble were in order as well as to post a body of cavalry on the Guiers to prevent incursions towards Lyons.'

After sending this report Conti proceeded with the measures needed for protecting the county of Nice and the quarters occupied by the army. It was desirable to drive Della Rocca from Breil, so Givry with half his detachment moved forward from Sospel to the Col de Brouis, sending Guendica with the other half over the

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hills to Dolceaqua, a Piedmontese castle with a small garrison, which was captured. Guendica then recrossed the hills to the Roya, making for a point above Breil, while Villemur from Castillon crossed the Bevera to Olivette and Penne. Della Rocca then seeing that he was likely to be attacked from three directions by forces in all double his own strength retired to Saorgio. He sent a detachment to hold the Col de Raus, where it would prevent Saorgio being turned from Roquebillière. Givry had posts on Mont Abellio to communicate by Rochetta with Dolceaqua, and further covered the Spaniards at Ventimiglia by a party sent to Pigna Triora and Andagna. These movements occupied the first half of May.

On May 16 Conti sent off to d'Argenson two papers of the utmost importance:

Memorandum on the offensive against Piedmont.

'To reach Lombardy by the Riviera being impracticable, the only other course is to invade Piedmont. If we can take a fortress in Piedmont, we shall have a depot from which we can start either towards Lombardy or to reinforce de Gages. Any attack on Piedmont must help de Gages because it will prevent Charles Emmanuel from sending troops to reinforce the Austrians. If we can beat the Piedmontese, we are also beating Maria Theresa and opening the way towards taking the Duchies for the Infant. Once you have beaten Charles Emmanuel, Lobkowitz will be unable to stand against two armies, one from Naples and the other in north Italy. The real question is as to the right method of invading Piedmont. We have to lure the Piedmontese army away from Cuneo, push our way through the mountains and besiege that fortress. Once in possession of Cuneo, you are in the best place either for the further invasion of Piedmont, or for a march down the Tanaro to Cherasco and Asti, and you can requisition supplies in the country round Mondovi and Saluzzo. Cuneo can be reached by the Val Stura, by the Col di Tenda or by the Col di Nava and Ormea. But at Cuneo, Charles Emmanuel has a central position from which to strike at an army coming from any of these directions. Accordingly, the first thing is to induce him to move his army away from Cuneo. The plan for effecting that is to threaten him at all other points of his frontier, the Stura, the Maira, the Varaita, the Luserna, the Chisone, the Dora Riparia, especially the Dora Riparia, which is the farthest away. This will make him divide his forces and then we can take advantage of the geographical conditions to reunite our own at the critical point before he can

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unite his. For this purpose, the correct manœuvre is to begin by collecting troops within striking distance of Exilles, by marching the battalions that are in Savoy up the valley of the Arc, and those that are in Dauphiné to Nevache, Monestier, and Queyras. At the same time, our army from the county of Nice must march towards Briançon. We should then by a sudden march concentrate the Savoy and Dauphiné troops at the Col de Sestrières, so timed that they would be on the Col on the same day when the advance guard of the chief army reached Briançon and Guillestre, and its main body Mt. Dauphin and Barcelonnette. On that same day, the rear-guard, after a demonstration at the Col di Tenda, should reach the valleys of Entraque and of the Tinée, ready to take the Barricades and Demonte in rear. These movements and these positions will make it impossible for Charles Emmanuel to know what is our real objective, and will oblige him to move troops away from Cuneo and the Stura, in order to protect the other districts, after which we ought to be able with the rear columns to reach the Stura below the Barricades and the Ponte del Ola below Demonte. If Charles Emmanuel moved only to Saluzzo, the central position for the protection of all his valleys, he would be four days' march from the Barricades and three from the Ponte del Ola, while the allied army would be only one from the Barricades and two from the Ponte del Ola.

Suppose Charles Emmanuel refuses to budge, the Allies can choose between

1. Attacking the Val Stura,
2. Attacking both the Val Stura and the Col di Tenda,
3. Attacking and besieging Exilles.

Another plan for reaching Cuneo with a view to besieging it is to make use of the two routes, by Tenda, and by Triora and the Col di Nava. This operation would be shorter and less fatiguing for the troops. Its weak points are that the exits of these two routes on to the plain are a good way from one another (for the Col di Nava route comes down to Ceva and Mondovi), while the Piedmontese at Cuneo are in a central position between them. Moreover, until we have taken Saorgio we cannot tell whether the Col di Tenda is practicable for guns.'

Memorandum on the defence of Nice. May 16.

'Villefranche and Mt. Alban with their garrisons can neither protect Nice nor cover Provence. We can protect Nice more easily from a Piedmontese invasion than from landings from the British fleet. We should have to have detachments in the valleys of the Tinée and the Vésubie, and guard the route from Tenda by posts at Sospel, Luceram, Breil, and the Col de Brouis.

We should have to mask the route from Oneglia by detachments at Dolceaqua and Mentone with supports at Castillon,

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Castelar, St. Agnes, and La Turbie. This means a great dispersion of troops; but these posts might give us time to collect our forces for a battle, and might harass the enemy's flanks and communications. If he invaded Nice with a large force, we could make a counter-attack by the Stura or by Susa.'

The Spanish plan for an advance along the coast was examined in a letter from Bourcet to d'Argenson, written at Nice on May 30.

'There is no position in which we can cover a Spanish march along the coast, protect the county of Nice, and at the same time be able to resist an invasion of Dauphiné in case Charles Emmanuel attempts it, for wherever we place our army he will have less distance to march than we shall.

The only plan I know for putting him off the scent is to have our left at Briançon and our right at Barcelonnette, for then we can move along the chord, while he will have to move along the arc. We should have to leave a few battalions in Provence, and march the rest of the army to Dauphiné.

The difficulties of the Spanish march along the Riviera are:

1. They cannot take artillery.

2. If attacked, they cannot collect their forces in time as it would take eight days for the tail of their column to reach the head.

3. If they have to halt a few days, they cannot be supplied. It is impossible to defend both Nice and Dauphiné as there is no position from which both can be covered. One or the other must be left to itself with five or six battalions.'

On the 30th of May, La Mina, impatient to be on the way to Genoa, sent off an advance guard of four battalions to Ventimiglia, and Conti sent Montcalm with a couple of battalions to Dolceaqua to protect their march. He had already covered the flank of both armies by a series of posts: four battalions at L'Escarène, seven at Sospel, three at Lantosque, and two at Belvedère above Roquebillière. Conti persuaded the Infant to promise that La Mina's advance should be delayed in order to give time to hear from the two Courts. He suggested to La Mina that it would be prudent to screen his march along the coast by sending a part of his force as a flank guard into the hills on the line Triora–Pieve, and this hint was taken.

Conti's letters took a week to reach d'Argenson, who was no longer at Versailles. On the 23rd of April Louis had declared war against Austria and on May 4 left

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Versailles to join his army in Flanders. On June 1 Conti received the following:

D'Argenson to Conti. Camp before Menin, May 24.

'I cannot better convey to you the impression which your letter has made on the King than by sending you a copy of the letter which His Majesty has written to the King of Spain, as the only means of removing from that Prince's mind the prejudice with which his Ministers have inspired him on the subject of the supposed facilities for passing into Lombardy by way of the mountains of Genoa. His Majesty's opinions, which you will find in this letter, conform so closely to yours that they will prove to you better than I can express that there is nothing in your conduct which has not His Majesty's entire approbation, and His Majesty is making every effort to convert the Court of Madrid to your opinion, which is indeed the only one in which can be found substantial advantages capable of leading to the end which we propose in uniting our forces with those of Spain. The frank and natural manner in which the King explains his views to the King, his uncle, ought to dissipate all the bad interpretations which M. de la Mina may like to put upon the conditions on which His Majesty offered to allow part of his troops to accompany those of Spain on the route to Genoa. His Majesty does not conceal his judgement that this plan is impracticable, and he finds that nothing can be more suitable than the siege of Cuneo, and that any adhesion he may have given to other ideas has been merely the result of his complaisance for Spain and in no way of his conviction. You have therefore, Monseigneur, nothing to do but wait for the effect which this letter will produce. . . .

As we may flatter ourselves that His Majesty's letter will produce its effect, Your Highness should turn your mind to preparations for the siege of Cuneo, which the King is proposing to His Catholic Majesty as an operation which may take place during the course of next month.

Your Highness may avoid expressing yourself about the enterprises which are to follow this siege, or rather may allow the Spaniards to contemplate those which may best conform to their ideas and taste; it is probable that if this operation succeeds it will infallibly produce altercations between the Queen of Hungary and the King of Sardinia, altercations may give rise to overtures concerning which we shall then be in a position to decide.

The project of this siege is treated with much detail and exactitude in the memoir of Your Highness entitled "Memorandum on the Offensive against Piedmont" and His Majesty entirely approves of the plan. . . .

His Majesty has approved of the Memorandum which Your Highness proposed to send to the Court of Madrid and has

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instructed me to send it to the Bishop of Rennes with the letters which accompany it to make use of them at the time when this Ambassador will present the King's letter to Their Catholic Majesties. . . .'

In d'Argenson's letter was enclosed a copy of:

Louis XV to Philip V. Camp before Menin, May 23.

'I have put off as long as I could opening my heart to Your Majesty to say how grieved I am to see that the plan of the Marquis La Mina does not seem to me in accord with sound judgement, and I have taken advantage of this delay thoroughly to examine personally the plans for making our way into Italy. I shall not conceal from Your Majesty that I see clearly for myself the consequences of pushing forward without having our communications secured. I have no other object than the preservation of the states of the King of the Two Sicilies and the establishment of the Infant my Son-in-law. The King of Sardinia has failed us: we must make him repent of it. I know that the conquest of the county of Nice throws him into the greatest embarrassment and has spread consternation in his country, which I think it will not be difficult to invade if our forces remain united. In spite of that I do not suggest that we should swerve from our principal purpose. Our entry into Piedmont will open for us that of all Italy, and I look upon it merely as a means that ought to free the Kingdom of Naples from the forces of the Queen of Hungary, either by opening to us a safer passage to go and fight them or by compelling them to come to the help of the King of Sardinia.' . . . As regards the Riviera route the King went on to say: 'I have questioned and had memoranda given me by several generals and special officers who have made war in that country or who followed this route at the time when we had the King of Sardinia on our side and I can assure your Majesty that not one has given me any hope that we could pass an army along this road by force with all that is necessary to enable it to act effectually and with the supplies that it requires.'

Conti having read these letters naturally supposed that his plan of campaign would be accepted and the coast route rejected. He would of course have to wait some days before the decision of Philip V could reach Nice from Madrid. Accordingly he went from Nice to Antibes to make arrangements for the march of the army to Dauphiné so as to be ready as soon as he should hear from Madrid. Returning to Nice on the 3rd of June he found that La Mina had ordered his advance guard to push on from Ventimiglia towards Oneglia and had followed it with

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sixteen more battalions, had collected the remainder of the Spanish infantry at Ventimiglia and Mentone, and had ordered the Spanish cavalry up from Provence. Conti was the more surprised at this because the Infant had promised that if La Mina insisted on moving along the coast before the final decision he would at least go slowly. But La Mina had received an angry letter from Madrid asking him why he was wasting time and giving him a peremptory order to march along the coast at once. La Mina's advance guard approached Oneglia on the 6th, whereupon the Piedmontese garrison withdrew towards Ormea. On the 7th La Mina with his sixteen battalions joined his advance guard at Oneglia. He then himself returned to Nice in order to persuade Conti to fall in with his plan.

Conti, however, had no idea of having his hands forced by La Mina, least of all after d'Argenson's letter enclosing that of the King. While La Mina had been moving along the coast Conti had quietly sent off four battalions into Dauphiné, with a view partly to his own plan of operations, and partly to strengthen the defences of Dauphiné in case he should after all be obliged to follow La Mina. Meantime the Comte de Maillebois with Bourcet's assistance was working out in detail the plan for the march of both armies into Dauphiné.

When Vaureal, the French Ambassador at Madrid, received the letter written on May 23 by Louis to Philip he thought it imprudent himself to present to the King and Queen a communication which he knew they would dislike, so he forwarded it through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Villarias. When he attended the reception next day the Queen looked serious and dismissed the courtiers as quickly as she could. She then handed the letter to Vaureal to read aloud. Vaureal paused at several passages to let them produce their effect. 'It is certainly well written,' said the King of Spain. The Queen, by a gesture, showed that she agreed. Then she said, 'If the King of France has his officers and his engineers, who advise him in one sense, we too have ours who advise us in another

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sense, and why should we not believe them?' Vaureal respectfully observed that Spanish officers and engineers had not written any opinions as to the possibility of the plan. 'We have no need', answered Elizabeth, 'that any one should propose plans to us; we make the plans and order their execution.' Some days later she said to Vaureal, 'Is it right that people who know nothing, who understand nothing, and of whom not one has ever been in the country in question, should prevail over us who have sense, and over me who have seen the road?' After this later audience Vaureal wrote to the Prince of Conti:

'The sole argument to which everything must yield is that the Queen travelled that way in a sedan chair when she came to Spain to be married. In other words that a person of twenty who goes over the mountains in a chair with the help of many workmen can judge thirty years afterwards whether an army with cavalry and artillery can pass that way. . . . To all my arguments no other answer has been given than "I tell you I have been that way", and when I wished to represent the difference between that journey and the march of an army the Queen replied: "I know very well that I am only a stupid woman, but I thought at least that I could judge of a road by which I had travelled."'

Vaureal was no friend of Elizabeth's and made no allowance for her difficulties and anxieties. She had just heard that Lobkowitz was on the march from the Adriatic coast to the Roman Campagna which portended the invasion of Naples that she dreaded. She could not understand why the Franco-Spanish army could not march from Nice to Genoa and Lombardy. The objects of the French King were the same as her own to protect Don Carlos and to settle Don Philip at Milan. Surely, she thought, the best plan was for the army to go the shortest way to Milan. Even if it was necessary first to take Cuneo, why go round by Dauphiné when the short way was by the Col di Tenda as any one could see from a glance at the map? She had no one to tell her that before reaching Tenda the army would have to spend months over preparations to take the castle of Saorgio, and that even then it would be confined to a long defile and to a high pass by which it was impracticable to take the guns required for a siege.

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A few days after Louis' letter came a letter from Campo-Florido, the Spanish Ambassador at Versailles, telling the King and Queen that Maréchal Noailles and the other trusted advisers of Louis were all against the Riviera route. Accordingly on June 11 Philip wrote to Louis :

'In spite of my reasons for preferring the other route as the one by which I can soonest send help to the King of the Two Sicilies I consent to our two armies besieging Cuneo together on condition that they afterwards go straight to Lombardy, and that they go to Cuneo by the Col di Tenda, which is the shortest way. I think that we ought as soon as possible to negotiate with the Genoese, and for that purpose I have given La Mina full powers.'

The decision announced in this letter was conveyed to La Mina in a dispatch which reached the Infant on June 16. Accordingly on the 17th the Spanish troops at Oneglia began their march back to Nice and reached Mentone on the 19th, by which time the rest of the Spanish troops were collected at Ventimiglia, La Turbie, and Nice, ready for the move into Dauphiné.

iii. *The March into Dauphiné*

DURING the winter of 1743–4, Charles Emmanuel had considered the problem of the defence of Piedmont against invasion from Dauphiné. He adopted a plan of which the outlines were suggested by his general, Guibert, as well as in an anonymous memorandum, which has been preserved with the king's comments upon it. The weight of the defence should be thrown into those valleys which were not protected by fortresses. The main force should therefore be placed in the valley of the Varaita, and comparatively small forces in those of the Maira and Stura. The cavalry should be posted near Cuneo to watch the exit from the Stura valley. In case the enemy should reach Demonte, his communications should be interrupted by guerrillas, who would attack his convoys and make raids into French territory.

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The trenches in front of Casteldelfino, which the Franco-Spanish army had vainly attacked in 1743, were strengthened. A redoubt was built on Monte Cavallo at the end of the great spur of Pietralunga between the two branches of the Varaita, and trenches were made also in the valley of the Varaita di Bellino, their flank covered by a redoubt at the Colle della Bicocca. The most important precaution taken was the construction of a road called the cannon route (because it was made practicable for artillery) from the Val Varaita to the Val Stura. It started from Ribierra in the valley of Bellino, went up to the Col Bicocca, followed the ridge to the Col Sampeyre, then went down to the Maira at Pontecheina, and up the valley of Marmora to the Col del Mulo, whence it followed the valley of the Arma as far as Demonte.

The defence of the Stura valley rested not only on the fortresses of Cuneo and Demonte. About 7 miles below the Col de la Madeleine is the defile known as the Barricades, one of the strongest positions for defence that can be found. Charles Emmanuel fortified this point and prepared the defence of the passes between the Stura and the Maira by which the Barricades can be turned.

In accordance with the general scheme of defence the Sardinian army was distributed. It consisted of 54 battalions. No Sardinian troops accompanied the expedition of Lobkowitz against the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Of the 54 infantry battalions, two were in the island of Sardinia, and nine were distributed as garrisons of the northern and eastern frontiers, including Piacenza and Modena, which had been occupied in 1742, leaving 43 for the defence of the assailed frontier. Of these, ten were assigned to the valleys of the Dora Riparia and the Chisone, four of them at Susa, and six above Fenestrelle. A battalion was posted in the valley of the Po, as a support to the Vaudois, to whom was entrusted the defence of the passes between Fenestrelle and Monte Viso.

Eighteen battalions guarded the Varaita valley, six in the northern and six in the southern fork, and six at Fondovet on the northern slope of the Col Sampeyre. In

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the Maira valley, one battalion at St. Martin di Stroppo guarded the Ponte Cheina, with an advance post at Acceglio, and was connected by dismounted dragoons and militia with the Col Sampeyre. Two battalions held posts connecting the Valley of the Maira with that of the Stura. Eight guarded the defences of the Barricades. Cuneo was garrisoned by three battalions. The passes leading from the Stura valley to that of the Tinée were guarded by small posts of militia.

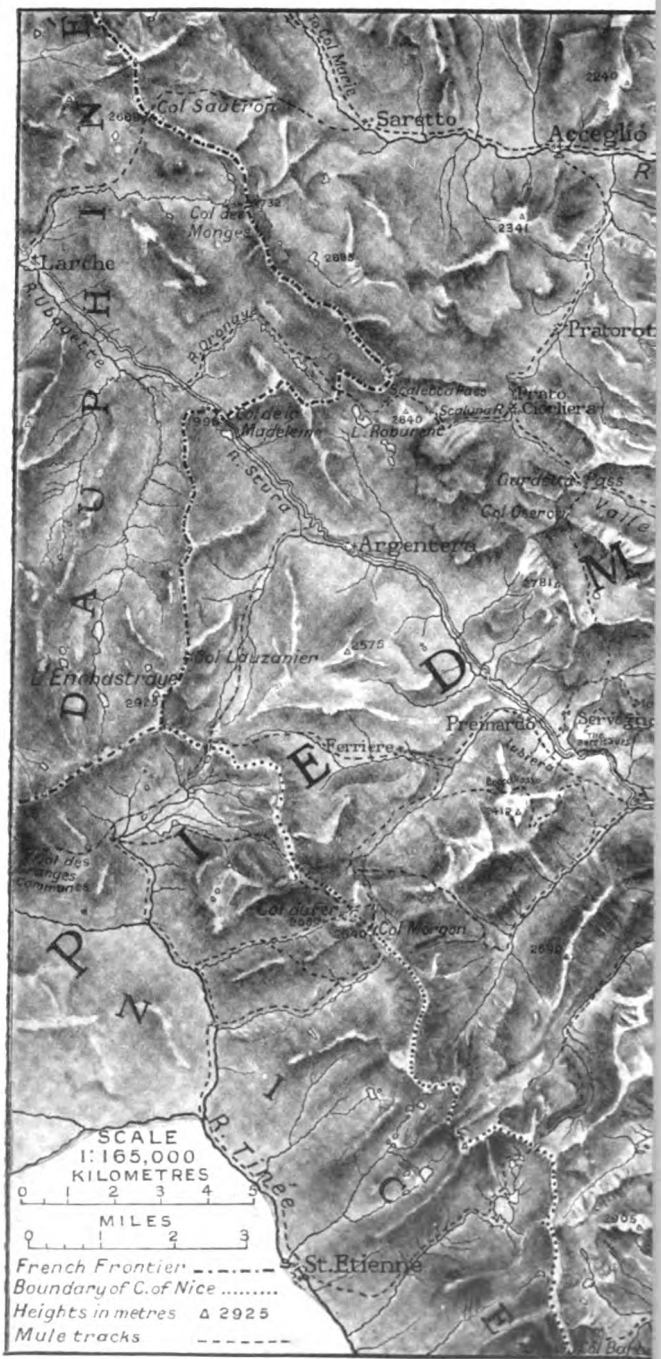
The 43 battalions at 606 men per battalion would be 26,000 men, and, though the army must have suffered some waste in 1742 and 1743, recruiting and reorganization had been so busily carried on during the spring of 1744, that this average strength was probably attained. That would give 11,000 men in the Varaita, 1,800 between Maira and Stura, 5,000 in the Stura valley, and 6,000 in the Dora and Chisone valleys, leaving 1,800 in the fortress of Cuneo. A plan of defence which, having 26,000 men to put in the front line, fails to have more than 11,000 at the strongest point is obviously faulty, and we shall have to consider later on the nature of the mistake.

On June 14, after the receipt of d'Argenson's letter enclosing that of Louis XV, but before King Philip's letter of June 11 to Louis XV could have reached Nice, Bourcet wrote to d'Argenson:

'As it has been settled that the Spaniards are to go with us, and that the Tenda route is too difficult, I would like the army to be assembled at Briançon, Mt. Dauphin, and Tournoux, and then to make no plan until we have learned where the enemy stands. But as it is important not to lose time, it has been decided to begin the operations the moment these camps have been reached. I am afraid the arrangements may be so complicated that one or another column may break down. We shall try to make the enemy believe that we mean to attack Exilles while our real purpose is to take Demonte. If the King of Sardinia divides his forces, can he prevent us from making our way either into Val Stura or Val Varaita? He certainly cannot prevent us from besieging either Exilles or Demonte. I should prefer Demonte if we are able to take Cuneo as well. Otherwise I should prefer Exilles, because if we take it, we can hold it through the winter, when we cannot hold Demonte.'

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THE COL DE LA MADELEINE

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The movement of the army from the county of Nice to Dauphiné was worked out on the basis of a paper prepared by Bourcet during the first fortnight of June. Some 30,000 men were to be moved from the coast near Nice to the frontier of Dauphiné, where they were to reach points dotted along a line of 30 miles among the peaks and gorges of the rocky, barren, inhospitable Alps. Between Nice and the Durance, 75 miles in a straight line, no carriage road crossed the mountains. Wherever they went, except in the valley of the Durance, the troops must march by mule-tracks and must cross passes most of them not less than 7,000 feet high. Along such tracks the men had to march in single file, and if there was to be no crowding or confusion not more than three or four thousand men must pass along the same stage in one day. Arrangements had to be made in advance to collect supplies of food at the places through which the troops would pass, and the routes, which therefore had to be laid down beforehand, had to be the shortest that could be found consistent with practicability.

Bourcet's paper is headed 'Reflexions on the plan of campaign aiming at the Valley of the Stura and the siege of Demonte and Cuneo on the supposition that the Spanish army will not separate itself from that of France'.

'If we leave the county of Nice to its own forces and do not make use of the Col di Tenda because of the difficulty which must be met at several points on this route, it would be imprudent to send a body of troops into the valley of Valdieri:

1. Because if the King of Sardinia should not withdraw his troops from the valley of the Stura, it would be easy for him to cut off this body, which would have no communication with the rest of the army except by long and difficult routes over high mountains.

2. Because this body could not come out into the valley of the Stura except between Demonte and the Barricades, i. e. in the centre of the enemy's army.

We must therefore limit the range of our operations on the frontiers of the valley of Barcelonnette against the valley of the Stura.

To operate in this valley with any hope of success we must needs take a position which, by rousing the enemy's apprehensions concerning all the lines of approach, will compel him

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to divide his forces and to take away troops from the neighbourhood of Cuneo and Demonte.

This position ought to threaten Exilles more particularly than the valley of Casteldelfino, because from the valley of the Stura to that of Casteldelfino you could never put off the scent an enemy who, by the new communication established between the two valleys, could play the shuttle, a condition which does not apply to the valley of Susa, to which he cannot move except in several days' march, involving his going back to the plain.

In consequence we must:

1. Provision Briançon as though we really intended to attack Exilles, and encamp at Sainte Catherine below Briançon a number of battalions that can go in a day's march to the Col du Bourget (Col de Bousson), whence they will be able the next day to go and occupy the Col de Sestrières, combining their march for this operation with that of our columns in such a manner that on the day when the battalions march to Sestrières the head of a column will be reaching Briançon and can reinforce them if required.

2. Set gangs of men to work on the roads at Mont Genèvre, Cervières and the Col de Vars all at the same time. The first two roads are on the way to Exilles, which we threaten to besiege, and the third we shall in any case require for the passage of guns into the Stura valley.

To carry out the plan the army can march in two columns by divisions of eight or ten battalions: the left column by Grasse, Castellane, Digne and Seyne to Embrun; the right column by Entrevaux, Colmars and the Col d'Allos to the valley of Barcelonnette; the guns and train by Manosque and Sisteron.

When both columns have reached their destinations we shall be ready, in case the King of Sardinia removes troops from the Stura valley, to move the first division of the right column from Barcelonnette in two bodies, the one by Les Granges Communes and the mountain of Salzo Moreno,[1] whence by the lake of Morgon it can make its way to Ponte Bernardo below the Barricades; the other by the Cols de Clapouse[2] and de la Moutière[3] to Saint Dalmas and Saint Etienne, whence by the Cols of Sainte Anna, du Fer, de Barbacane or de Mouton[4] it also can reach the Stura valley below the Barricades.

The second division, marching by St. Paul to Maurin and ascending the Col Marie, will enter the Maira valley and will do on the left what the first division is doing on the right, while the

[1] Salzo Moreno is the name of the basin marked by the letter 'I' of Piedmont on the map facing p. 134.

[2] Now called Col de Restefond, between the Col de la Moutière and the Valley de la Clapouse, which goes down to Jausiers.

[3] Between Fours and Saint Dalmas.

[4] Close to the Col de Saint Anna.

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third division, going to Larche and passing the Col de l'Argentière, will be able to advance as far as Preinardo above the Barricades.

Note that all these bodies communicate with one another by the Cols du Lausanier, de Sautron and des Monges; moreover as the first division (of the left column) is sufficient at Briançon as a reinforcement for the battalions at Sestrières, it will be easy to move the two other divisions of this column by the Col de Vars to the point at which they may seem most necessary. If they start from Guillestre (which is a central point roughly equi-distant from Tournoux, the Maurin, Queyras and Cervières) they could in the same time reach any one of the points where they might be needed; they would start on successive days.

It is desirable that we should make our advance on Sestrières at least two days before we move up the valley of Barcelonnette.'

The movement into Dauphiné was carried out according to Bourcet's plan, the first division starting on June 19, the day on which the last of the Spanish troops returned from Oneglia. Three Spanish divisions, forming the left column, marched by Castellane, and reached Briançon, Guillestre, and Embrun on July 5. Three French divisions, forming the right column, marched by Colmars, and reached the valley of Barcelonnette, the first on July 1, and the last on July 8. But the turning movement suggested in Bourcet's paper of two of these divisions by various high Cols into the Stura valley below the Barricades, was given up, and instead the Spanish divisions of Castelar and of Mauriac, which by Bourcet's first plan were to have been left in the county of Nice, were brought up by July 8 to Peone and Beuil in order at the right moment to cross over from there into the valley of the Tinée, from which, by passes over the main chain of the Maritime Alps, they were to reach the Stura valley below the Barricades, and so to turn the Piedmontese position.

The two Princes travelled by Draguignan, Riez, Sisteron, and Gap to Guillestre. Bourcet was at Mont Dauphin on June 24.

Bourcet to d'Argenson. Mont Dauphin, June 25.

'I arrived here yesterday and M. le Comte de Maillebois will be here directly. We shall begin to sketch the plan of the first operations according to the ideas expressed in my letter of

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the 14th, with this difference that it has been finally decided to remain in the three positions of Briançon, Guillestre, and Tournoux for a few days in order to give the general officers time to get to know the passages against which they will have to operate. But that will not prevent the twenty battalions which are to encamp below Briançon (i. e. Givry's division already there and the Spanish division due on July 5th) from marching upon the Col de Sestrières in order to put the King of Sardinia off the scent.

A few days later we shall make dispositions for the attacks in the valleys of Bellino, of the Maira, the Stura and Saint Dalmas, and according to me that in the valley of the Maira ought to succeed best, as the troops which will march thither can move either to their left to the valley of Casteldelfino or to their right to the valley of the Stura, according to the requirements of the case, and can also cut the communication which the King of Sardinia has lately opened from Demonte to Casteldelfino crossing the Val Maira.

It is impossible that the King of Sardinia can be in force everywhere; one of our corps is bound to get through, in which case they can all be united at the same point in a short time and take advantage of the gap made by the corps which will have penetrated his line; it follows of necessity either that we shall succeed in turning the Barricades or that we shall make ourselves masters of the valley of Casteldelfino; but that presupposes that all the corps will act in concert and that the effect will everywhere be the same.

If we turn the Barricades we can undertake the siege of Demonte; if we penetrate by the valley of Casteldelfino, we shall enter the marquisate of Saluzzo, whence we can easily move upon Cuneo and Demonte, so that either the one or the other will bring us to the same point.

We shall arrange the marches of each corps and settle the number of troops that ought to act upon each point. His Serene Highness (i.e. the Prince of Conti) will be able to see for himself the passages that we shall suggest to him and to decide upon the general plan as soon as he is on the spot.'

Bourcet to d'Argenson. Mont Dauphin, June 26.

'I have sent off several persons to have news of the enemy and to get to know their different positions; until now they have only five battalions in the valley of Susa, six or seven in the valley of Casteldelfino and the rest in the neighbourhood of Cuneo and within reach of Demonte and the Barricades; the summit of the mountains is still covered with a great quantity of snow, but as we shall not operate for a fortnight all our passages will be free by then and the snow will no longer be an obstacle for us; the only thing I am afraid of is the slowness of the Spaniards, when we have to decide upon operations which like

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these require prompt execution after there has been time enough to reflect upon them; and I think, too, that if the Spaniards were to operate together on one side while the French are operating on the other things would go better, for I have noticed a great antipathy between our troops and theirs, which, it is to be feared, may affect the officers. This is very contrary to our well-doing, above all, when we must perforce concert together the reciprocal operations of one and the other army.'

Bourcet to d'Argenson. Briançon, June 29.

'We were yesterday morning on the mountain of le Bourget with the Comte de Maillebois. I pointed out to him all the positions of Sestrières and of the three Champlas, as well as the entrances of the valley of Susa and of that of Bardonecchia and of Cesana. Up to now there are only two hundred Vaudois at San Sicario, a few companies of peasants scattered about and four battalions at Oulx, Exilles or Susa; so the position of Sestrières will not be hard to take and there is no appearance of the King of Sardinia wishing to take away troops from his Val Stura nor from the valley of Casteldelfino to come and protect the approaches to Exilles; accordingly we shall not be able to put him off the scent. However, that is not yet decided and perhaps his troops are on the move towards the valleys of Susa and Pragelas, which would well suit our plan of making the greatest efforts to turn the Barricades and to be able to undertake the siege of Demonte with its necessary consequence the siege of Cuneo.

I shall start to-morrow for Embrun, where I shall find H.S.H., who has ordered me to join him with the Comte de Maillebois. According to appearance they will make the final resolutions for the plan of attack upon a number of passages; I shall have the honour of acquainting you with them and adding my humble remarks (*mes petites reflections*) as you seem to wish me to do. I go this evening to Mont Dauphin and M. de Maillebois to Embrun.'

Bourcet to d'Argenson. Embrun, July 3, 8 a.m.

'It was at last decided yesterday evening that we are to attack the Barricades on the 12th of this month, with thirty-four or thirty-six battalions disposed upon several points of which I shall have the honour to give you the details by the first courier, having only a moment for this note and finding myself obliged to go immediately to H.S.H. I shall add my reflections and, if I possibly can, a sketch of the ground by which you will be able to judge of our disposition.

The rest of the troops will march by the valley of Casteldelfino: we shall act in the Maira valley, which lies between the two. I have no doubt of success provided all the corps act in unison and with the same energy. There is every appearance that the King of Sardinia will not be put off the scent about Exilles, which he would not be able to reach in time.'

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On July 5 the two divisions, that of Givry which had moved from Briançon to Cervières and the Spanish division which had just reached Briançon, marched over to the Col de Bousson to Bousson and Cesana. On the 9th, two French and two Spanish battalions from the force occupying Savoy crossed the Col de la Roue to Oulx, and seized a Piedmontese depot of supplies, in which, however, there was practically nothing. Next day the Prince of Conti inspected the troops at Bousson and Cesana in order that the presence of the Commander-in-Chief might confirm the impression that the great attack was to be delivered in this quarter. But on returning to Briançon he learned that La Mina had ordered back the Spanish troops from Bousson, had prematurely pushed forward advance guards towards the Stura, and himself visited that part of the front, in this way suggesting to the enemy that the attack might just as well be expected in the Stura valley as in that of the Dora. The French headquarters felt that their whole plan was upset.

On the 12th Conti wrote from Guillestre to d'Argenson complaining that La Mina's premature advance and his showing himself at the front had revealed the plan to the enemy. 'All our movements', he says, 'are disclosed by indiscretions. There is not one of the Infant's servants who does not know the exact day when he will leave one camp and when he will arrive at the next.' A day or two later he explains, 'La Mina distributes among the Spanish officers accurate and detailed copies of the march of all our columns. I have just found in the possession of a French officer a copy of the scheme translated from the Spanish. It is impossible to carry on war with an ally whose incapacity, ill will, and bad faith upset every arrangement.' At the same time, Conti reports that, in accordance with his instructions, he is concealing his real feelings from the Spaniards, and treating them with the greatest politeness. His object in writing is that the French Court may appreciate the difficulties of his position.

No wonder that La Mina obstructed the French plans;

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Elizabeth Farnese had by this time acquired such an ascendancy over Louis XV that, in order to meet the wishes of his aunt, the French King was willing to compromise the military judgement of his generals:

d'Argenson to Conti. July 12.

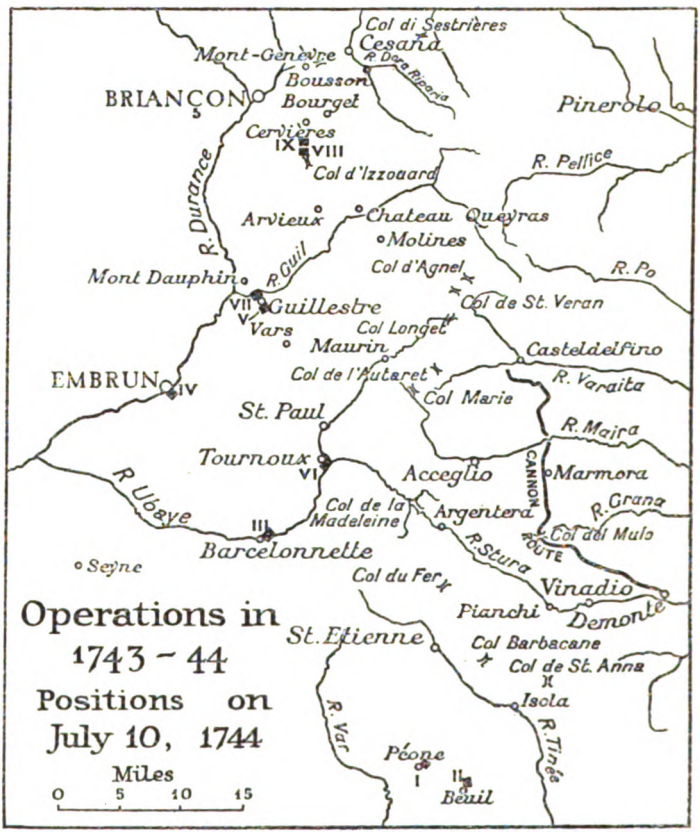
'The King's sole object and interest in the war in Italy is to help to obtain the Duchies which the Queen of Spain wants for Don Philip. I agree with you about the importance of our communications and that we ought to go step by step. But we are bound to meet the wishes of the Spaniards. They want to march the army straight from Cuneo to Milan. That is obviously a bad plan, but Louis XV thinks we shall be obliged to agree to go at any rate to Piacenza. If we insisted on a campaign in Piedmont, it would lead to a breach with Spain.'

Bourcet's plans, however, had reckoned with just such a disappointment as was experienced. In his view, a plan should have several branches, and every effort be made to mislead the enemy as to the main purpose. But if these efforts fail, the general must be ready to adopt a second or third branch of the plan without giving the enemy time to consider it. The second branch of the plan, in case the demonstration towards Exilles should fail, was a demonstration against Casteldelfino, and this was immediately put into operation. No change of dispositions was required except for the two divisions which had gone to Bousson and Cesana. These were immediately brought back on the 10th through Cervières to the foot of the Col d'Izouard, which they crossed next day, the 11th, to Arvieux. The rest of the troops were moved so that on the 11th one division was at Meyronnes on the road to the Col de la Madeleine, another at Maurin in the upper valley of the Ubaye, and three at St. Paul, the two divisions in the county of Beuil keeping quiet in their quarters.

On the 12th, three divisions stood, one behind the other, between the Col de la Madeleine and Larche, two were at Maurin, and the two that had come from Briançon were at Molines and Villeveille above Château Queyras. By the 15th, these two divisions had marched round by Ceillac and the Col de Cristillan to the Col Longet, where

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they were joined by one of the divisions from Maurin, the other of which camped on the Col Marie. On this day, also, the two divisions at Péone and Beuil began to cross over the mountains to the north of them into the valley of the Tinée about St. Etienne. As they had hitherto



been separated by two high mountain ranges from the valley of the Stura, no hint of their whereabouts or even of their existence had reached the Piedmontese headquarters.

The presence of four divisions, together 35 battalions, some 17,000 men, on the Cols leading directly or indirectly to the two branches of the Varaita was bound to have the

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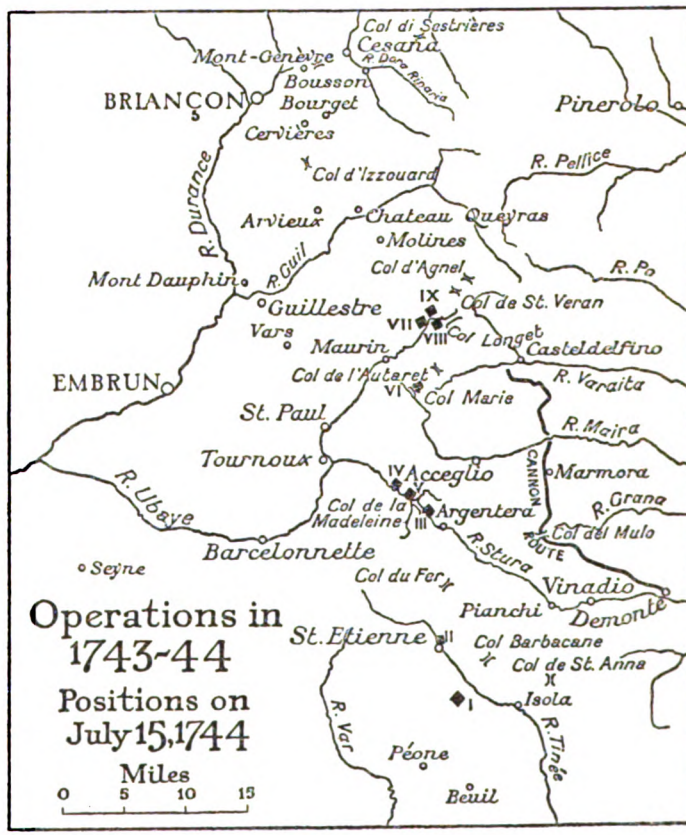
desired effect of inducing Charles Emmanuel to stand by his dispositions and to keep his main force to defend the entrenchments which he had so carefully prepared in this region and which had triumphantly resisted the allied attack of the year before.



Next day, the 16th, while the two right-hand divisions took their station in the valley of the Tinée opposite the Col Barbacane and the Col du Fer, and the three divisions still waited on the road near the summit of the Col de la Madeleine, the three divisions from the Col Longet marched back, one of them crossing the Col Marie (together with the division already stationed at that pass)

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to Saretto, while the other two crossed the Col de l'Autaret and took post, one at the farm of Cornasco, a mile or two down the valley of the Varaita, and the other at the Col de Traverse, on the ridge which separates the Varaita from the Maira. On the 16th also an extra column or division



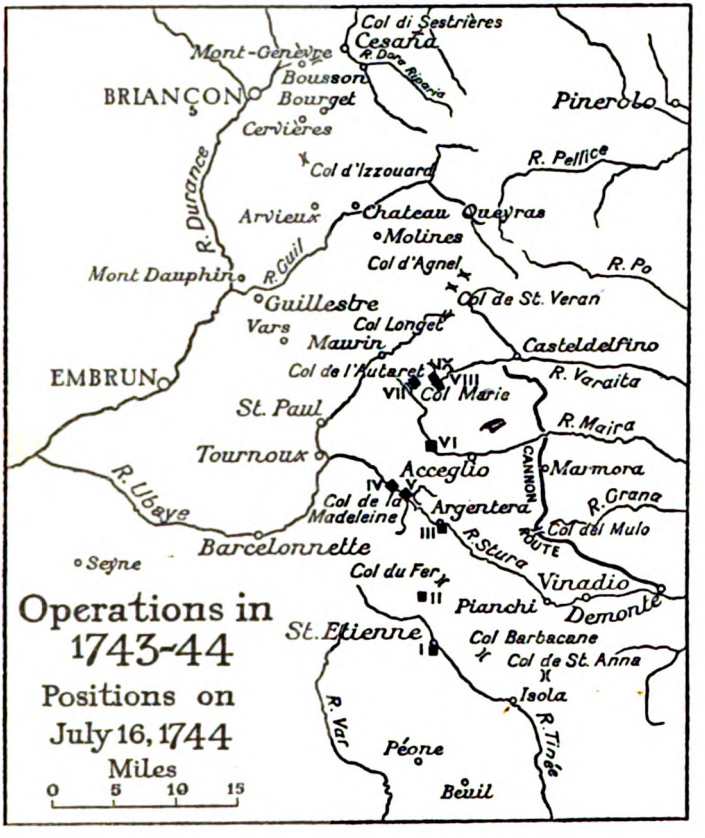
(of six battalions taken from the Spanish columns) was posted near Larche ready to move by the valley of the Oronaye to co-operate with the columns acting in the Val Maira.

The 17th was fixed for the great *coup*.

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iv. *The Barricades and Pietralunga*

THE planning and carrying out of the series of marches which had brought the troops into their positions formed a remarkable piece of staff work.[1] Bourcet, their author,



had decided views on such manœuvres. The first and most elementary principle was that no division should be expected to march on any day more than a reasonable distance. The fourth division went in three marches from Embrun by Guillestre and St. Paul to Maison Meane, one of the best routes in the whole region. Its longest march was 13½ miles. No other division was required to do

[1] These marches are shown in the table, p. 146: The Franco-Spanish army in Dauphiné, July 1744.

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THE FRANCO-SPANISH ARMY IN DAUPHINÉ, JULY, 1744.

Distribution and Routes of the Divisions.

No. of Division	*Commander*	*No. of Battalions*	*July 10*	*July 11*	*July 12*	*July 13*	*July 14*	*July 15*	*July 16*	*July 17*
I.	**Castelas**	**8**	**Péone**	..	...	..	..	**La Roja**	**St. Étienne**	**Les Planches**
II.	Mauriac	5	Beuil	..	Péone	La Roja	..	St. Étienne	Vens	Les Planches
III.	Villemur	8	Barcelonnette	Meyronnes	Col de l'Argentière	..	..	..	Argentière	Ferrière
IV.	Pignatelli	8	Embrun	Saint Paul	Maison Méane	..	..	..	..	..
V.	Avemburu	6	Guillestre	Saint Paul	Larche	Col de l'Argentière	..	..	..	..
VI.	Lautrec	14	Tournoux	Maurin	..	Col Marie	..	..	Sareto	Prazzo
VII.	Gandija	6	Guillestre	Saint Paul	Maurin	..	..	Col Longet	Col Marie	Acceglio
VIII.	Campo Santo	5	Cervières	Arvieux	Molines	..	Ceillac	Col Longet	Col de Traverso	..
IX.	Givry	10	Bourget	Arvieux	Ville Vielle	..	Ceillac	Col Longet	Granges de Cornasco	..

Of these columns VI Lautrec was composed of two of the three French divisions which had marched from the county of Nice.
VII Gandija was formed at Guillestre of six battalions, two from each of the three Spanish divisions IV, V, and VIII.

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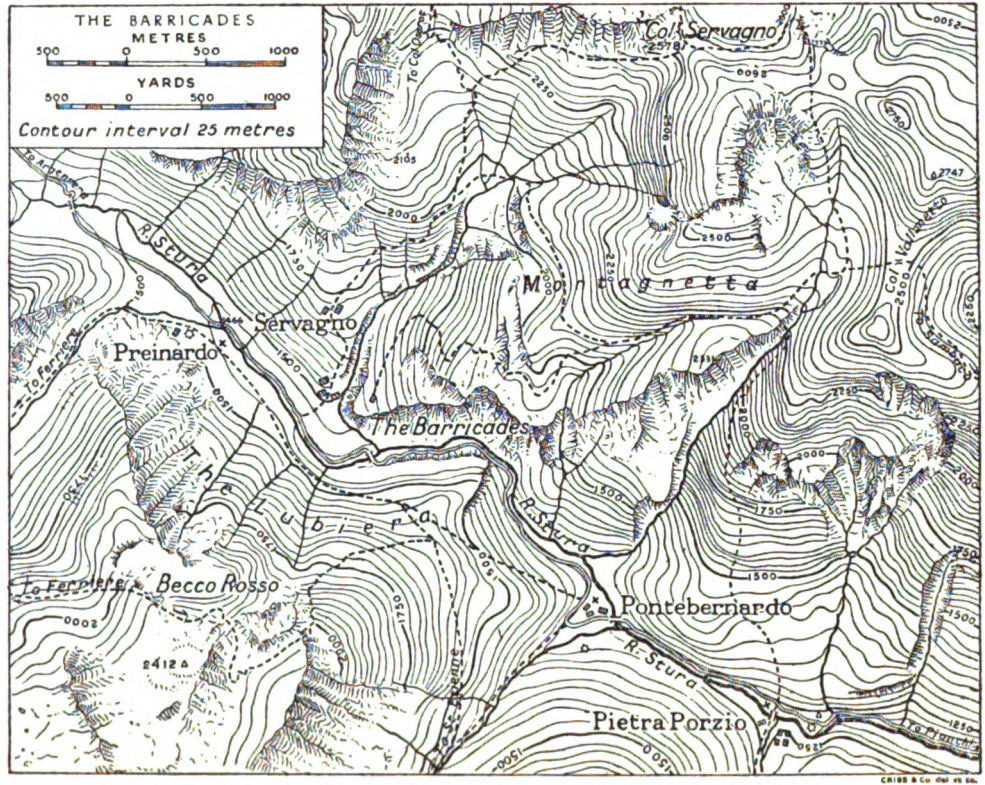
more than 11 miles on any day, and the average day's march was only 9 miles. This sounds a short distance, but it must be remembered that in almost every case, very considerable heights had to be ascended or descended. Most of the divisions had at least two rest days interpolated in the course of their marches.

The greatest care was taken at every stage to ensure the communication between each division and its neighbours, so that no possibility was left for the enemy to interpose between them. In the mind of a good general the march of an army, or of one of its fractions, such as a division, is not regarded as a continuous, uninterrupted flow, but as a series of movements from position to position. 'By a position', says Bourcet, 'we mean the field of battle within reach of which we place the camps which we propose to occupy with a view either to attack or defence.' The cardinal principle is that you never halt your troops, either in camp or bivouac, without having reconnoitred and determined the position which you will defend in case you are attacked, and without knowing how, if you are undisturbed, you will make your next move.

The marches from the region between Barcelonnette and Briançon, to the heads of the Varaita and Stura valleys, were so arranged and timed that at every stage there were practicable lateral communications from right to left, by which, if need be, the greater part of the army could be collected in the centre or on either wing.

The total strength at Conti's disposal was about 33,700 men. There were 38 Spanish battalions of which few had more than 350 men, and 32 French battalions of some 550 men each, making a total of 31,700 regular troops. To these must be added some 2,000 Spanish mountain troops and irregulars. The divisions varied in strength from 4 or 5 to 14 battalions. Some 7,250 men were devoted to the demonstration in the Varaita, 9,800 to the Val Maira, half of whom were to co-operate against the Stura, and 14,650 were to encircle and to attack the position of the Barricades.

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Below the village of Servagno, the Stura runs for 1,100 yards round the steep nose of a promontory, jutting out from the mountain on the south, and this promontory almost fits in to the curved face of a great precipice forming the north bank. The precipice to the south is 30 or 40 feet high, that to the north, 600 or 800. Such road as there was followed a ledge by the river at the foot of the southern precipice, and crossed the river by a bridge as it emerged towards Servagno from the defile. The Piedmontese had done everything to make this gorge impassable. They had broken the bridge, piled up huge boulders to prevent a rush in the entrance of the defile, erected a palisade behind the boulders with a great trench behind it, and behind that again, a parapet mounting two or three guns. On the promontory south of the river, called the Lubiera, they had a couple of trenches with four guns and a post at the Becco Rosso, where a path coming over the mountain top and leading down to the Lubiera commands the position. The mountain on the north side rising up from the terrible precipice is called the Montagnetta. The slope above the precipice for three-quarters of a mile is quite practicable, and is approached by two paths from Servagno. This slope was strongly entrenched, as was also the path leading up from Servagno to the Cols of Servagno and Oserot.

The position thus formed was so strong that a frontal attack upon it, even by a very large force, had little prospect of success, and the 8 battalions assigned to it, of which 4 defended the Montagnetta, and the other 4 the defile and the promontory of the Lubiera, were considered a fully adequate garrison. But the position might be turned. Troops might come up from the valley of the Tinée, cross the cols, and strike the Stura valley below the Barricades. Charles Emmanuel knew nothing of the two allied divisions which were destined for that movement, and was therefore content to entrust the defence of the left flank to parties of peasants and militia, men of the *levée en masse*, posted at the various passes. But of the threat from the Val Maira he was well aware. One

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way of turning the position on the right was to come up from the Maira by the valley of Marmora to the Col del Mulo, and thence down to Sambuco. Just south of the Col del Mulo, many paths meet and cross. Those that go westward lead into an upland valley called Pianes, resembling the emptied basin of a lake, about four miles long and a mile wide, drained by the Rio del Preit, which runs down through the village of Preit, past that of Marmora to the Maira. From this valley of Pianes various cols lead over its southern rim, and by one or other of these the Montagnetta can be reached either in front or in rear. It was therefore important, if the Barricades were not to be turned, to hold, not only the Col del Mulo, but the valley of Pianes. From the north and the west there were only two entrances into it, one the Col del Preit, through which the river flows, which was entrenched and guarded by a battalion, and the other the Gardetta pass at the west end. On the outward slope of this pass, two sets of trenches had been prepared, and were also occupied by a battalion.

There were two ways by which the Allies could reach the defences of the Gardetta, one up the valley from Acceglio by Prato Rotondo and Prato Ciorliera, the other by the valley of the Oronaye, a stream which flows down from the mountains to the west of the Col de la Madeleine. Troops ascending this stream as far as the lake of Roburent could then mount the steep Scaletta pass, and descend the equally steep Scaluna pass to Prato Ciorliera.

The plan of the Allies for July 17 was that their left-hand division was to descend the Varaita towards Bellino and demonstrate against the enemy there, its right flank protected by the next division advancing along the ridge between the Varaita and Maira; the next two divisions were to descend into Val Maira and cut the communications between the enemy's wings; the other five divisions were to throw themselves against the defences of the Stura, which before being attacked in front were to be turned on both flanks.

The night from the 16th to the 17th was one of pitiless

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rain, especially trying for troops bivouacking at heights between 6,000 and 8,000 feet above the sea, but it did not prevent them from reaching their destinations. The 1st division, crossing the ridge by various passes between the Col Barbacane and the Col of St. Anna, collected at the Bagni di Vinadio, and marched down to Pianchi on the Stura about six miles below the Barricades. The 2nd crossed the Col du Fer and made its way to the Stura at Pietra Porzio just below the Barricades. Neither of these divisions met with serious opposition, for the passes were guarded only by armed peasants, who dispersed in presence of large bodies of troops. In the Val Maira, the division from Saretto and that from the Col Marie which followed it, were formed into several parties, of which one descended the valley and observed the defenders of Pontecheina, a second marched by Marmora to the Col del Mulo, and a third ascended the valley of Preit, and attacked the defences of Pianes at the Col del Preit. A fourth moved by Prato Rotondo against the defences of the Gardetta at the west end of Pianes. Here it combined with the extra column from Larche which had ascended the Oronaye valley and crossed the Col Scaletta and the Scaluna. The trenches of the Gardetta were reached late in the day, and taken without difficulty. Late in the day also, the advance guard of the party in the valley of Preit attacked the entrenchments of the Col del Preit, and lost a few men. As it had now grown dark, the advance guard waited for the main body in order to renew the attack in the morning, but in the morning the trenches had been evacuated, for its defenders, learning in the night that the Gardetta had been taken, and that therefore in the morning they would be attacked in the rear as well as in front, had marched off towards the Col del Mulo. Here they were joined by the whole body of the defenders of the Montagnetta, the Barricades, and the Lubiera.

During the 17th, the Piedmontese commander had watched from the Montagnetta the advance of a large body of troops from Argentera down the Stura valley, and had been informed of the seizure by a strong body of

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the defile behind him at Pianchi, and of the movement of the other division, which from the Col du Fer was moving on Pietra Porzio. It was evident that if the Piedmontese troops held their positions, they must be captured. Their retreat by the Stura was already cut off and the allied troops now in the valley had only to send a party from Sambuco towards the Col del Mulo to block the last possible line of retreat. Accordingly the Piedmontese commander ordered the retreat while there was time, and made his way by the Col Vallonetto, whence one portion of his troops passed into Pianes (by the Col Salsa Blancias), and the other went direct to the Col del Mulo. This second party attacked the allied troops that had reached the Col del Mulo—a mere advance guard—while the first party picked up in Pianes the troops retreating from the Gardetta and the Col del Preit, and retired with them to the cross-roads below the Col del Mulo. Thence the whole body retreated by the military road down the Val del Arma to Demonte.

La Mina, who commanded in the Val Stura, before delivering his attack, sent forward an officer's patrol to reconnoitre the Lubiera. This officer found the trenches abandoned. One of the divisions from the Col de la Madeleine had moved by a track over the hills to its right to the village of Ferrière, and thence ascended the Becco Rosso, which looks down on the Lubiera and commands the defences there. These defences were seen to be deserted. The allied troops then advanced and took possession of all the works on both banks, but it was not till the morning of the 18th that reports were received from the divisions in Pianes and at the Col del Mulo. Two officers were then sent with instructions to the Bailli de Givry, commanding the division which was to demonstrate in the Val Varaita, to inform him that the Barricades had been taken and that he must therefore deliver no attack. One of these officers was disabled by a fall in the mountains, and the other failed to deliver his dispatch until the evening of the 19th. This delay is not surprising, for, though the distance to be covered is only 9 or 10 miles in

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a straight line, the officer would either have to cross several passes more than 8,000 feet high, or to ride round by the valleys of the Ubayette and the Ubaye, and then also to cross a high and difficult pass.

The withdrawal of the Spanish and French divisions from Bousson on the 11th had convinced Charles Emmanuel that the movement in that direction was merely a feint, and accordingly, on the 13th, he had ordered 7 of the 10 battalions forming the garrisons of the Dora Riparia and Chisone valleys to march to Casteldelfino, and on the same day went to that place himself.

The allied demonstration to Bousson with its threat of an attack on Exilles had thus not been without its effect, for though it had not induced Charles Emmanuel to withdraw troops from the southern valleys, it had led him to keep at Susa and Fenestrelle forces larger than were there required, and his order of the 13th came too late.

On the 13th, a French detachment had shown itself on the Col d'Agnel, and on the 16th a party of French troops had moved down from the Col Longet to Chianale. Everything therefore pointed to a repetition of the attack of the previous year. There were in the Val Varaita some 12,000 Piedmontese troops, 18 battalions, of which 12 were posted from Monte Viso to Bellino, including a garrison on the ridge of Pietralunga, and 6 were encamped at Fondovet below the Col Sampeyre. The Piedmontese outposts were at the Gardetta, up-stream from Bellino. The centre of these Piedmontese defences was on the ridge of Pietralunga, a projecting spur from the main chain of the Alps, forming a hog's back three miles long, running almost due east and west. At its western end it is crossed by a path leading from one branch of the Varaita to the other over the Col of Bondormir, 3,400 feet above either stream, and 8,700 feet above the sea. From here the ridge rises towards the east to its summit, a mile from Bondormir, just under 9,000 feet high. From the summit the ridge falls away 1,500 feet in two miles to the Piedmontese redoubt of Monte Cavallo, and at the

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beginning of the descent is a sheer drop of several feet, difficult to pass on account of the very steep slope on either side. This was known as the Cat's Leap, and the Piedmontese had a bridge here to make the ascent or descent easier. Between the Cat's Leap and the redoubt were two Piedmontese barracks, about three-quarters of a mile from each other and from the redoubt. The redoubt itself was more than 2,000 feet above the Varaita. There was a Piedmontese post at Bondormir. The post at the Gardetta had supports at Chiazale, and the main defence of this branch of the valley consisted of entrenchments at Ribiera, which communicated by a path with the redoubt at Monte Cavallo, as did also the entrenchments in the Chianale valley. Of the two allied columns which had crossed the Col de l'Autaret, the smaller one, 5 battalions, under the Marquis of Campo Santo, had passed the night at the Col de Traverse, and the larger one, under the Bailli de Givry, had bivouacked at the farm of Cornasco on the Italian side of the Col de l'Autaret. During the 17th, Campo Santo made his way to the Pelvo d'Elva, the commanding peak of the ridge separating the valleys of the Varaita and the Maira, and on this height his troops bivouacked for the night. Givry descended into the Varaita valley, preceded by an advance guard under Chevert. Chevert attacked the Piedmontese post at the Gardetta, which resisted stubbornly until the French supports arrived and pushed up the side of the mountain to turn them. The Piedmontese then fell back through Chianale to Ribiera. The Piedmontese party posted at Bondormir came down from there to help in the defence of the valley, and was then driven back with the rest towards Ribiera. Chevert's troops made their way up the hill to Bondormir, and found the post unoccupied. There was no path along the ridge, and Chevert set his engineer with 600 men to make one, at which they worked for six hours. They levelled a track 6 feet wide along the northern edge of this ridge, but the ground was so difficult that the outer 3 feet of it fell away.

Next day, the 18th, Chevert had the work at his path

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continued, and proposed to the Bailli de Givry that they should attack the redoubt of Monte Cavallo. Givry held a council of war, and read his instructions, which said that he was not to attack unless he were satisfied that the Piedmontese were sending away reinforcements to the Stura, nor even then unless he saw some specially favourable opportunity. But the younger officers present were so eager for an attack that Givry consented and moved the main body of his column on to the ridge.

On the 19th, while Campo Santo moved from the Pelvo d'Elva to the Bicocca and there engaged the Piedmontese force from the Col de Sampeyre in order to prevent its sending reinforcements to Pietralunga, Chevert moved forward to the top of Pietralunga, and caused his men, one at a time, to jump down the Cat's Leap, from which the Piedmontese had removed the bridge, and where the French would have been exposed to the fire from the 1st Piedmontese barracks, but that they were protected by a mist. Chevert then collected his men, pushed on along the ridge, and stormed, first one, and then the other, of the barracks. Then he waited for Givry with the main body, and sent to summon the Piedmontese commander to surrender. The Piedmontese general replied that he and his men would do their duty. The Bailli de Givry made his dispositions for the attack, Chevert's advance guard on the left, the regiment of Provence in the centre, and the regiment of Poitou on the right, while two battalions of the regiment of Traverses were to move along the southern slope to prevent reinforcements from Ribiera from coming up the mountain side. There were 6 Piedmontese battalions in the redoubt, and Charles Emmanuel reinforced them by a 7th. The ground was so difficult that the two right-hand bodies of the French pressed to their left, and the whole column seems to have moved forward on the top of the ridge. The advance would have perhaps been impossible had not the mist rendered the enemy's fire comparatively ineffective. Otherwise, the two mountain guns which were in the redoubt would have made havoc with the crowded column.

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As the French approached the work the enemy's musketry did great execution, and, there being no cover, the troops rushed on into the trench at the foot of the enemy's palisades. Givry ordered a retreat, but the French troops would not budge. Nothing would induce them to go back up the slope of Pietralunga under the fire of the redoubt. The attack had begun at three o'clock, and the troops remained in the trench until after six. Givry and several other officers were mortally wounded. Then the young colonel commanding the regiment of Traverses moved his troops up the hill against the flank of the redoubt, and at the same time the troops in the trench made a desperate attack, pulling down the palisades and mounting up upon one another's shoulders. The Piedmontese then broke, and those that were unable to escape down the precipitous slopes were killed or made prisoners. The Piedmontese had over 700 killed and wounded, and left some 200 prisoners on the ground. The French had 800 killed and 800 wounded. Two hours after the firing ceased, the senior surviving officer of the French received the dispatch which informed him of the capture of the Barricades.

The action of Pietralunga was regarded as one of the most notable feats of arms of the eighteenth century, and the bravery of the troops on this occasion made a much greater impression in France than the skilful generalship which had brought about the capture of the Barricades almost without loss of life.

On the evening of the 19th, Charles Emmanuel withdrew his forces from Casteldelfino to Sampeyre, where he was joined by the 7 battalions from the Dora Riparia and the Chisone. The Piedmontese troops from the Bicocca retired in two bodies, one to the Col Sampeyre and the other to Stroppo in the Val Maira.

On the operations in the Val Varaita two criticisms must be made. In the first place, it was a fatal mistake for the Piedmontese post at Bondormir to leave that spot and come down into the valley for any purpose whatsoever. Chevert's advance guard could hardly have seized the place if it had been defended. There is no excuse for

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an officer entrusted with the defence of a specific point like this who leaves his post because something that seems to him important is happening elsewhere.

The Bailli de Givry, by reinforcing Chevert on Pietralunga and attacking there, departed both from the spirit and the letter of his instructions, which were to demonstrate in the valley without making a serious attack. If he was dissatisfied with the conditions of a simple demonstration in the valley, a far better course would surely have been to instruct Chevert to hold the Cat's Leap and the Col of Bondormir, to place a strong guard at Chiazale, and with his main body to join the Marquis of Campo Santo on the ridge to the south of the valley. The two divisions together might well have driven the Piedmontese from the Bicocca and pushed on towards the Col Sampeyre. This move would have turned all the Piedmontese defences and probably have brought about an immediate Piedmontese retreat.

The operations of 1744, by which the Barricades were turned, offer the best example of the eighteenth-century doctrine of mountain warfare, of which Bourcet was the chief exponent, and as this doctrine formed a very important part of Napoleon's system, and was indeed the foundation of his strategy, it is worth while in this connexion giving the substance of that doctrine, taken from Bourcet's principles on Mountain Warfare written many years after this campaign.

'In a mountain region, the all-important points for military purposes are the defiles, and when these, as is frequently the case, are impregnable against frontal attacks, the general taking the offensive must seek every possible means of turning them, and must so arrange his troops as to fix the enemy's attention on some point other than that of which it is intended to gain possession. For this purpose, a general will do well to divide his army into a number of comparatively small bodies, a proceeding which in another kind of country would be dangerous, but which in the mountains is indispensable and safe provided the general who adopts it makes such arrangements that he can reunite his forces the moment that becomes necessary. He must therefore make his dispositions so that the enemy cannot interpose between the fractions into which his army is divided.'

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The practice of subdividing and reuniting the army is regarded by Bourcet as indispensable for the purpose of deceiving the enemy, and inducing him to weaken himself in certain positions in order to strengthen himself in others.

'A general who intends to take the offensive should assemble his army in three positions, distant not more than a march from one another, for in this way, while he will threaten all points accessible from any portion of the 25 or 30 miles thus held, he will be able suddenly to collect his whole army, either in the centre or on either wing. The enemy will then be tempted to post troops to defend each of the threatened avenues of approach, and the attempt to be strong at all points will make him weak at each separate portion. However carefully the enemy may have prepared the communications between the several parts of his army, and have drafted the orders for its reunion in case of an attack at any point, he will not be able to concentrate his troops there in time, if only the attacking general has concealed his plan and his first movements. The attacking general will usually be able to steal a march, if need be by moving at night, while the defender requires time to receive warning, time to issue his orders, and time for the march of the troops to the point attacked.'

Bourcet compares a mountain region, such as we are considering, to a fan, of which the valleys are the blades. The defender will post troops at the head of each valley, but the assailant will strike with the bulk of his force at the head of one of the valleys, and, marching down it towards the centre of the fan, will turn all the others.

Accordingly, Bourcet condemns the method of posting troops to defend each valley. This he calls the 'simple defence'. The better plan is the 'active defence' of which the essence is the choice of a good position in which the whole army should be assembled with a view to strike out against the flank or rear of the assailant. This again is thoroughly Napoleonic. Napoleon described the method of attempting to defend every passage as a 'cordon'. 'This', he said, 'is the worst system of defence'. ('*Ce système est ce qu'il y a de pire dans l'ordre défensif.*')

The striking feature of the campaign of 1744 is the use made by the French army of the divisional system. An army of 75 battalions, 35,000 men, is subdivided for the

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operations into 9 divisions, and the whole force is directed by instructions to their commanders. Yet this subdivided army is so moved that the greater part of it can be brought together at any time. Care is taken to ensure the communications between the several divisions, so that the enemy can nowhere interpose between them. They are kept separate for the march and for convenience of supply, but are brought together to strike a blow. They are spread out on a wide front, like a net, in which the enemy is enveloped, and then they are drawn together to catch him unless he quickly escapes. This is the very method of Napoleon, whose great precept is *tenir son armée réunie*, by which he meant not keep it together in a mass, but spread it out in such a way that you can at any moment draw it together to converge on the point where you mean to strike.

Bourcet was not the inventor of this mode of operating. It had been originated by the great generals of Louis XIV, by Luxembourg, Berwick, and Catinat. It was employed in this very war in another field by the Maréchal de Saxe. But it was Bourcet who reduced it to a system and explained it.

Bourcet recommends the divisional system for the purpose of mountain warfare. But sixteen years later, in the Seven Years' War, the same method was employed by the Maréchal de Broglie in his campaign of 1760 against Ferdinand of Brunswick, in a country which, though hilly, can hardly be said to be mountainous. Of that campaign the designer seems again to have been Bourcet, who was a trusted adviser of de Broglie.

The campaign of 1744 in Italy was familiar to Napoleon, who proposed in 1794 to repeat it with slight modifications on the same ground and for the same purpose—to take the Barricades and to besiege Cuneo.

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v. *Demonte, Cuneo, Madonna dell' Olmo*

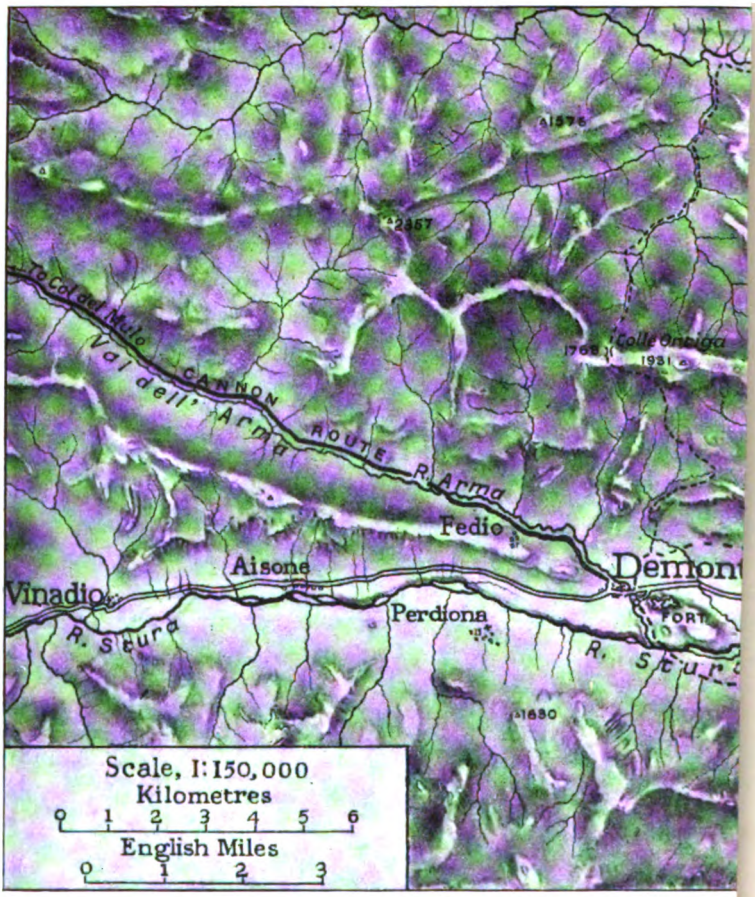
Now that he had possession of the Barricades, the Prince of Conti proceeded with his plan, which was to besiege and take Demonte and Cuneo, in order to have a secure starting-point for further operations. The Piedmontese, before abandoning the Barricades, had so mined the road through the actual gorge that it was quite impracticable. The Allies, therefore, made a new road over the spur of the Lubiera from Preinardo to Pontebernardo. This was completed by 800 men in two days, and on the 21st the main body of the allied army, 5 divisions, moved forward so that 4 of them encamped at Sambuco, where there is a very strong position, with the 5th in reserve at Pietra Porzio. The 6th division, a strong one, had its troops divided between the farm of Siteita and a position near Stroppo, apparently at Albaretto, guarding the Val Maira. The remaining 3 divisions held the captured Piedmontese positions at Casteldelfino, Pietralunga, Bellino, and the Bicocca. The allied cavalry, which, of course, could have been of no use in the attacks on the mountain positions, was ordered forward from its cantonments in Dauphiné, and marched down the valley of the Stura.

At this time the Piedmontese army had its main body at Sampeyre, at the Col Sampeyre 3 battalions, at San Damiano 6, and at Demonte the 8 under Pallavicini which had retired from the Barricades. The Piedmontese cavalry assembled at Saluzzo. On the 22nd, Pallavicini left 1,100 men to garrison Demonte, crossed the Ponte del Ola, which he blew up, and next day sent 4 battalions to Cuneo, and went with the other 4 to Busca, putting posts at Caraglio, Dronero, and on the road to San Damiano.

On July 26 the allied main body moved farther down the valley and encamped at Vinadio. Their positions in the Maira and Varaita valleys remained the same except that one division, of 6 battalions belonging to the Varaita group, moved forward to the Col Sampeyre, from which the Piedmontese detachments had been withdrawn. The importance of this will be seen shortly.

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Charles Emmanuel, in his new head-quarters at Sampeyre, had to make a fresh plan of campaign. Its necessary objects were to impede or delay the siege of Demonte, if he could not prevent it, and for this purpose to harass the allied communications with France, and also, if possible, to restrain the allied cavalry from raiding the plain of Piedmont. The plan of trying to be strong at all points had broken down, and the best course now was an active defence consisting in keeping the army together, and in choosing for it a position which would be difficult for the enemy to attack, and from which it could strike out in a telling direction, if and when the opportunity offered. On July 27 he caused his army to occupy the position of Becetto above Sampeyre, covering the pass of Cervetto, which leads to the valley of the Po. He had a post on this pass. His right wing faced west overlooking the torrent of the Crosa, while his left wing faced south overlooking the Varaita. This position could hardly be attacked with success. It effectually closed the Val Varaita to the enemy, for no army can move through a valley of which the enemy holds one of the slopes in force. It was within easy reach of the lower Maira and of the detachment at San Damiano in that valley, from which a couple of marches would bring the army on to the hills overlooking Demonte. Charles Emmanuel sent his artillery, except a few mountain guns, to Saluzzo, and the cavalry from that place to Caraglio, where it could better watch the exit from the Val Stura. The Sardinian army in this position gave the Allies more anxiety than it had when scattered among the mountains. Their first impression after the capture of the Barricades and Pietralunga was that they could advance down whichever of the valleys they pleased, but Conti now discovered not only that the Varaita valley was closed to him, but that, with the Piedmontese army at Sampeyre, even the Maira valley was too dangerous. In any case the lower Maira valley proved to be too narrow and too much obstructed by gorges to be available for the passage of troops. The siege of Demonte, which had seemed in advance a simple matter, became

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much more complicated when it might be interrupted by an attack from the north as well as by bands of armed peasants from the whole region between Boves and Mondovi.

The mode of defence which consists in taking a position on the flank of an enemy's march with a view to striking at him during its execution is excellent when it is practicable, but it requires that the position itself should not admit of being attacked in flank. This was the case with the position at Becetto, of which the right wing was impregnable, so long as the pass behind it was held. Much the same purpose was served by the position occupied on July 26 by one of the allied divisions at the Col Sampeyre, for the division might be used to strike at Charles Emmanuel's flank, if he should march from Sampeyre to San Damiano by the Col Birrone, the shortest route.

On July 31 the allied army moved nearer to Demonte, establishing its left wing, formed of the French infantry, at Fedio, and its right wing, composed of the Spanish infantry, at Perdiona on the south bank of the Stura. The transport of the siege artillery required extraordinary efforts. There was a shortage of mules, so that as soon as mules were required for the guns there were not enough for the supply of provisions. Moreover, the convoys were constantly attacked by bands of armed peasants. It was evident that before the siege of Demonte could begin the place must be cut off from communication with the Piedmontese army and militia. The Allies must gain possession of the hills overlooking Demonte from the north to prevent an attack from that direction, and of the passes leading from Demonte to the Val Gesso, as well as of the communications with Cuneo by the road down the valley, which crossed the Stura at the Ponte dell' Ola near Gajola.

As early as July 30, a detachment 400 strong, sent forward to Gajola, had been driven back by a band of peasants. The much larger parties sent to seize the pass of the Madonna del Colletto leading to Valdieri and the

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passes of the Ortigo and of Valloriate over the ridges to the north were both in the first instance defeated by bands of peasants supported by Piedmontese regular troops. In each case a second attack in considerable force was necessary. A second attack was also needed to drive the Piedmontese post from the Ponte dell' Ola, which the French, after taking it, repaired. The siege of Demonte was then begun by 12 battalions, while the main body moved on towards Cuneo, an advance guard going to San Rocco, the cavalry, which had now arrived, moving with 4 battalions in support, by the right (south) bank of the Stura towards Borgo San Dalmazzo, while the main body, 30 battalions, marched down to Gajola. At this time a Piedmontese force of 7 battalions assembled at the bridge of Vignolo, and, as the Allies advanced, took post at Caraglio. With a view to the advance against Cuneo, Conti withdrew his troops from the Varaita. To cover his communications he placed 2 battalions at Guillestre, 2 at Larche, 4 at Argentera, and 10 divided between Acceglio and the farm of Siteita north of the Col del Mulo.

The retreat of the French parties from the Varaita was covered by the division posted at the Col of Sampeyre, and when they reached their new posts this division also was withdrawn to join the main French army. Its retirement removed the menace to Charles Emmanuel's right flank in case he moved south, and accordingly, a day or two after it had left, he crossed the mountains to San Damiano in the Maira valley. The French behaved with great harshness to the inhabitants of the mountains, with the result that they could obtain no supplies from them and that all the able-bodied peasants were in arms against them. One of the Spanish generals, the Marquis of Campo Santo, treated the peasants more humanely than the French, and was consequently able to obtain supplies for his division. The hostility of the peasants very quickly made itself felt on the communications of the allied armies. Convoys were constantly attacked, some of them taken and plundered, and the difficulties of supply, serious enough in any case, seeing that everything had to be brought on

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mules from Barcelonnette and Guillestre, were thus greatly increased. On August 10 the inhabitants set fire to the village of Aisone, where were the headquarters and the lodging of the two princes, as well as to the villages in which the French and Spanish infantry were quartered. The fires were with difficulty put out. The princes had a narrow escape and Bourcet's maps and papers were burned. The treatment of the people by the allied troops became harsher than ever. A day or two before this, a party of Vaudois from the valley of the Luserna crossed the ol de la Croix and raided the villages of Abries and Aiguilles in the valley of the Guil, taking back with them fifty regular soldiers as prisoners.

The siege of Demonte was begun on August 9 by the digging of a trench which started from a point between the west end of the town and the Stura, and was eventually carried due east across the river Arma, over which a bridge was made, until its east end was opposite the south-east corner of the fort. Two batteries were built on a line running north from the west end of the trench. They opened fire on the 13th, with 4 16-pounders and 6 mortars. On the 16th the Allies also opened fire from 3 batteries on the south bank of the Stura, due south of the fort. On the 17th the bombs set fire to a number of buildings inside the fort, in which there was a good deal of timber that had been brought in for the improvement of the defences and had not been put under cover. The consequence was that the fires could not be put out, and the troops, believing that the magazines would take fire, ran out of the place. The garrison major assured the governor that the magazines were perfectly safe, but the governor called a council of war, hoisted the white flag, and surrendered. The Allies then came in and extinguished the most dangerous fires. None of the magazines blew up.

Charles Emmanuel's plan, in marching his army from the position near Sampeyre to San Damiano, had been to move across the hills to relieve Demonte, while the cavalry in the plain observed the opening of the Val Stura,

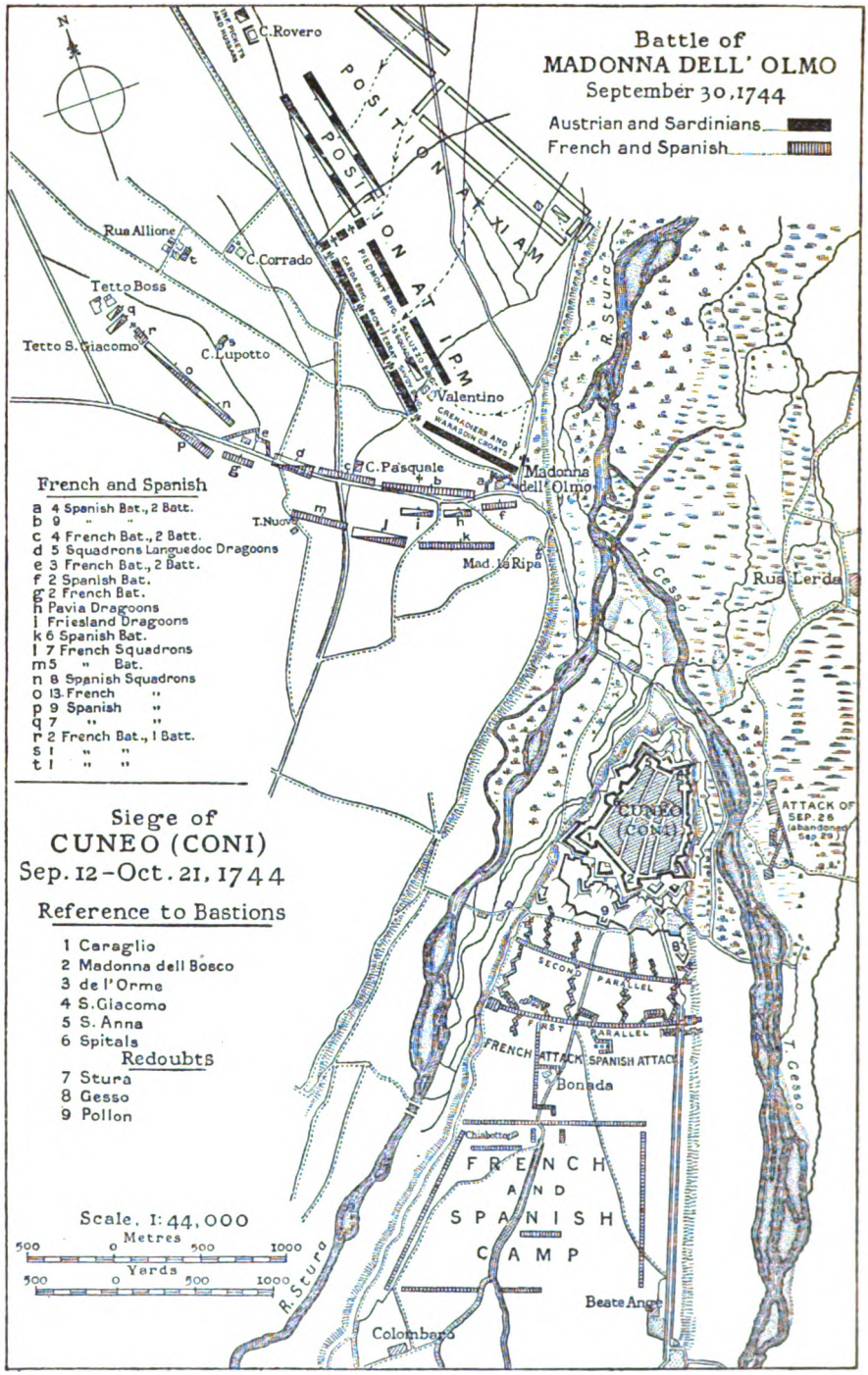
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and the Marquis of Ormea, with a few battalions at Mondovi, was to raise 10,000 peasants in that province and move towards Cuneo through the hilly country to the south. The fall of Demonte made an end of this plan. Accordingly, on August 19, Charles Emmanuel moved the army to Busca, where it was joined by the cavalry from Caraglio.

We left Conti with his main body, 30 battalions, at Gajola, and 6 battalions at San Rocco. On August 14 the bulk of the allied army was collected between the Stura and the Gesso on a level with Vignolo. Here a bridge was made across the Stura, and on the 21st the troops that had been besieging Demonte moved forward to join the main army. The same day the whole of the allied cavalry, some 11,000 horsemen with 30 infantry battalions, crossed the Stura and marched towards Caraglio, which was reached on the 22nd. The Allies dared not begin the siege of Cuneo with Charles Emmanuel's army in the neighbourhood. If they could make him fight and beat him, their task would become simplified. Charles Emmanuel thought it prudent not to risk a battle in which the Allies would not only outnumber his infantry but have more than double his force of cavalry, so, in the night of August 23-24, he retired from Busca to Saluzzo, where he took a position facing east, with the rear-guard at Manta and the left flank at Propano. Part of the allied cavalry followed to Manta, but then retired. The Allies gave up the attempt to follow and divided their army into a corps of observation (19 battalions and 50 squadrons) which encamped with its right at the Madonna dell' Olmo, its left stretching in the direction of Caraglio, and a siege corps of 25 battalions encamped at Castagnaretto. The magazines and hospitals were placed at Borgo San Dalmazzo with an escort of 2 battalions. Fourteen bridges were thrown across the Stura to connect the two forces. A battalion was left at Demonte and small detachments at points in the Val Stura. Cavalry detachments were pushed out in front to Centallo and Tarantasca.

The Allies still treated the Piedmontese people badly.

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Conti himself wrote (16 November 1744): 'In vain we practise the most horrible cruelties to intimidate the Piedmontese militia. They serve only to encourage the Piedmontese to avenge the blood of their compatriots and to double their efforts against us.'

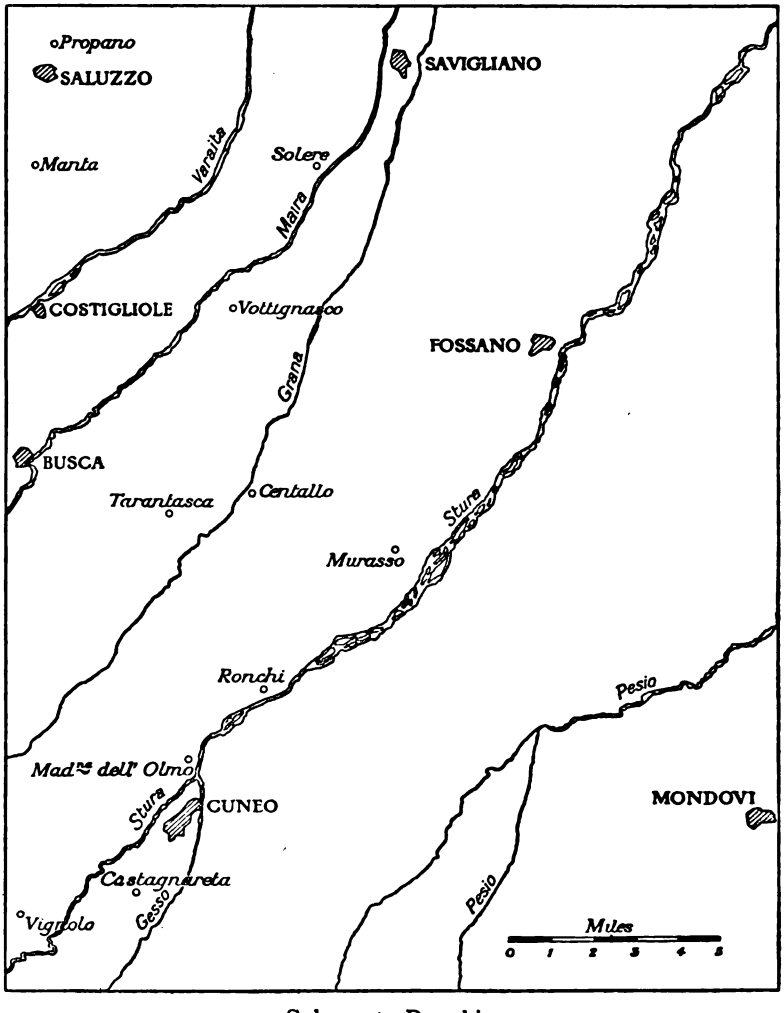
Cuneo was defended by a good general, Leutrum, with a garrison of 3,244 regular troops and a large number of militia. There was the usual disagreement between the French and Spaniards as to the siege operations. The engineers recommended that the attack should be directed against the south front, but Conti was anxious for a second attack from the east across the Gesso. La Mina objected to this, and work was begun against the south side. The first parallel was begun on September 12. On the 16th the Allies opened fire with 18 heavy guns, 7 mortars, and 5 batteries, and on the 17th, with 4 more heavy guns and 2 more mortars. The damage done to the defenders' works was considerable, and on September 25 the second parallel was completed. On the 26th, Conti sent troops across the Gesso to erect 3 more batteries, which were ready on the 28th.

The effect of the presence of the unbeaten Piedmontese army at Saluzzo on the mind of the French commander, the prince of Conti, cannot be better expressed than in his own words. On September 25, when the building of the first battery was begun on the east of the Gesso, he wrote to d'Argenson:

> 'I should hope much from the battery which we are beginning to build to-day if the King of Sardinia were so much impressed by our position as not to undertake to disturb our operations, for if he comes and offers us battle, we cannot possibly keep up our new attack (beyond the Gesso), for it is not enclosed in our system of trenches and we should be obliged to withdraw both the men and the guns.'

Charles Emmanuel, at his camp at Saluzzo, was kept well informed of the state of affairs at Cuneo. The besiegers were making progress, the works on the southern face had suffered seriously from the bombardment, and the batteries from beyond the Gesso were preparing an attack

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Saluzzo to Ronchi.

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which, if pressed, would be exceedingly dangerous. An attempt must, if possible, be made to relieve the town. There was no reason for delay as he had received a reinforcement of Austrian troops, which, though small, was all that he was likely to obtain.

The Austrian general, Pallavicini, had brought up from Lombardy two Austrian battalions and a body of Croats, altogether about 3,000 men, to the Piedmontese camp at Saluzzo, and an Austrian battalion of 573 men had been sent by sea from the army of Lobkowitz and disembarked at Loano, whence it marched to Mondovi, where on the 23rd of September it came under the orders of Ormea.

After deliberation with his generals and the Marquis of Ormea, Charles Emmanuel settled his plan, which was:

1. To make a demonstration towards Busca to mislead the enemy.
2. To march the army by Vottignasco and Murasso to Ronchi.
3. Thence to attack the right of the allied position at Madonna dell' Olmo.
4. To send troops and militia from Mondovi to attack Borgo San Dalmazzo.
5. To send militia by Vignolo to destroy the Ponte dell' Ola.
6. The garrison of Cuneo to make a sortie against the siege works.

The movement from Saluzzo to Ronchi was a flank march along a curve of which the Franco-Spanish army was at the centre. It was therefore so arranged that the army could at any moment meet an attack on its flank. The infantry was formed in two columns, so that by fronting to the right, it would be in order of battle in two lines, while the cavalry was divided into two columns, one on either flank to protect the march, and to be ready to form up in case of need on both wings of the infantry. On the 26th the army marched in this order from Saluzzo to Vottignasco, but the roads and the weather were so bad that it had to halt there on the 27th. On the 28th the movement was continued from Vottignasco to Murasso,

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and on the 29th from Murasso to Ronchi, about 2½ miles from the Madonna dell' Olmo.

The Allies had fortified the Madonna dell' Olmo with a redoubt having its back to the church and the river, and facing almost due north so that its guns would sweep from the flank the ground in front of their line of battle. Their army was drawn up in two lines stretching from the bank of the Stura westwards, but with its left a little farther forward than its right. Three farms about half a mile from one another had been fortified and armed with guns to make as many strong points along the front, and behind these, in the intervals between them, the army was formed in two lines of which the second, except on the right wing, was of cavalry. Charles Emmanuel's plan was to move up to the position on the 30th, and spend the afternoon of that day in cannonading the allied right and especially the Madonna. For that purpose he had strengthened his artillery by additional heavy batteries from Cherasco. In order to move quickly into position, he advanced from Ronchi in a number of columns, the left hand one marching close to the river bank and the others keeping level with it. About half a mile from the Madonna the bank of the Stura makes a curve, so that if the left-hand column went straight on, it would be outflanked by the work at the Madonna.

The Piedmontese army deployed into line along the road from the Madonna to Tarantasca, along which it placed a row of *chevaux de frise*, turning round at a right angle to cover the right flank, and at intervals along this front were a number of batteries. While this formation was being taken, the allied position was hidden by the trees, and a fire suddenly blazed up in front of the French right at the Madonna. There were a few houses here to which the Allies had set fire. The troops of the Piedmontese left-hand column, whose business this day was to reconnoitre the enemy's flank and to bombard the Madonna and the redoubt, attacked the houses, but were driven out by a counter-attack which captured the Piedmontese battery here. The Piedmontese retook the battery and

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renewed their attack. Charles Emmanuel's plan was thus upset, but he saw that it would be more dangerous to break off the engagement than to carry it through, so he gradually reinforced his left from his right, and the Allies followed suit by reinforcing their right from their left. Meanwhile the allied cavalry came forward and attempted to charge the Piedmontese right wing and right flank, but they were broken by the Piedmontese artillery and could not face the *chevaux de frise.*

Towards evening, Charles Emmanuel found that he had used up the best of his infantry in the attacks on the Madonna without success, as was inevitable without an adequate previous bombardment, while the rest of his line had been so weakened that he could hardly expect it to stand against a serious attack. So when it grew dark he retreated, covered by a rear-guard, to Ronchi, and next day to Murasso. Parties of allied cavalry followed him cautiously, but there was no effectual pursuit. Though repulsed, Charles Emmanuel did not give up the game, and the defeat was not decisive, for he remained at Murasso until October 8.

In the battle of Madonna dell' Olmo the numbers were, French 26,000, Piedmontese 25,000, and the losses, French 4,000, Piedmontese 4,300.

During the battle Leutrum made two sorties from Cuneo, one against the siege works to the south, which failed, and another across the Gesso, which, assisted by militia from Mondovi, destroyed the siege works there.

According to the plan made at Saluzzo and the instructions then issued, the reconnaissance of the Madonna dell' Olmo was to have taken place on September 29, and the actual attack to be delivered on the 30th, but owing to the loss of a day on the march from Saluzzo, the preliminary reconnaissance had not been attempted until the 30th, and had then become the attack. According to plan, an attack by militia from Mondovi was to be made on Borgo San Dalmazzo, simultaneously with the first reconnoitring stage of the attack on the Madonna dell' Olmo, and the day fixed was therefore the 29th, the day on which the Piedmontese

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army was to absorb the whole attention of the Allies. But it proved impracticable to inform the commander of the militia that the army would be a day late, and he therefore attacked Borgo San Dalmazzo on the day originally fixed, the 29th. It was thus possible for the Allies to move troops from their camp between Cuneo and Borgo to assist the garrison of Borgo so that the militia and peasantry were driven off with heavy loss. This would not have been possible on the 30th, when the besieging army was fully occupied in resisting Leutrum's sorties. In the days before the telegraph, nothing was more difficult than to ensure the simultaneous action of forces operating at points only a few miles distant from one another.

On October 8, Charles Emmanuel retired to Fossano and there threw a bridge across the Stura, and sent to Cuneo a reinforcement of 1,500 men who entered the fortress in safety.

In this attempt to relieve Cuneo, neither Charles Emmanuel's strategy nor his tactics were perfect. It was probably a mistake to plan his attack against the strong point of the Allies, their right wing, which rested on the Stura. According to Bourcet, he would have had a better chance of success if he had rested his own right wing on the Grana. In that case he might have pushed this right wing beyond the allied left wing, refusing his left wing. The Allies would then have had to fight with their backs to the Stura, a very serious obstacle, especially as in this part there was no bridge across that river, and their strong point at the Madonna dell' Olmo would have been of no use to them. Still more effective would have been a march due south from Saluzzo past Busca, leading to an attack on the allied left flank, but Charles Emmanuel was probably afraid of the superiority of the Allies in cavalry.

The siege languished for a week after the battle. On the night of October 4–5 a flood in the rivers Stura and Gesso carried away all the bridges which the Allies had made, and the heavy rain flooded the trenches. On October 7 the Allies exploded a mine under the Stura redoubt but Leutrum drove them back with a sortie.

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By this time the Prince of Conti realized that he was in a precarious position analogous to that of Charles Emmanuel at Montmelian two years before. It was quite clear that Cuneo would be able to hold out until the passes were blocked by snow. The allied army would then have no retreat, and it would be impossible to feed it during the winter whether Cuneo should have been taken or not. Meantime the army was starving. Charles Emmanuel had sent cavalry to Savigliano, Solere, Costigliole, and Busca, so that the Allies had a very restricted field for requisitions. It was impracticable to bring sufficient supplies over the Col de la Madeleine, on which the snow had been falling since the end of September. Since the beginning of the siege the combined army had lost in action and by sickness no less than 10,500 men. But the opposition between the views of Conti and those of La Mina, each of whom was guided by the instructions of his own Court, made a prompt decision impossible. Elizabeth Farnese's one idea was to get the Infant's army into Lombardy, there to be joined by de Gages and Don Carlos. To this end she had wished the army to march along the Riviera to Genoa and thence to invade Lombardy, assuming that by this way the Piedmontese army could be evaded and that Lobkowitz would then be obliged to retreat and would be unable to prevent de Gages and Don Carlos from joining the Infant. According to the French view the Piedmontese army could not be evaded and must be defeated as a preliminary to any invasion of Lombardy, and its defeat would not be facilitated by the adoption of the Riviera route. On the 11th of October La Mina proposed an immediate retreat, which Conti wished to postpone in order to have time to repair the fortress of Demonte, to be used as a starting-point for the next year's campaign. La Mina wished to destroy Demonte so that the next year's campaign would have to follow the Riviera route. On October 17 a council of war decided for the retreat, and Conti the same day wrote to submit to Louis XV the arguments both for the repair and for the destruction of Demonte. In order to conceal the forth-

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coming retreat, another mine was exploded on the 18th which did some damage, though Leutrum again by a sortie parried the offered assault. Meantime the hospitals and magazines were sent back, on the 21st all the outlying detachments were called in, and on the 22nd the retreat began. On the 23rd the army camped at Demonte, where it was halted to wait for the decision of the two governments as to the course to be pursued in regard to that fortress. On the 1st of November Conti received d'Argenson's reply to his dispatch of October 17. It was dated October 25 at the camp of Freibourg, where the King, who in August had been dangerously ill at Metz, had gone after his recovery to superintend the siege. The King thought that, as the Spaniards objected to the French plan of an advance through Piedmont, it was no use putting a garrison into Demonte where it could not be supported during the winter, and it would be best to destroy the fortress. Next day, November 2, the Infant received a dispatch from Madrid ordering him to return to Piedmont, to besiege the fortresses of Ceva and Saorgio, and to take winter quarters within reach of Genoa. The Infant, with La Mina's approval, wrote back to explain that this was quite impossible. On November 5 the Infant received another dispatch repeating the orders of the 2nd, and La Mina now insisted on waiting at Demonte for further orders from Madrid, and meantime on setting to work to repair the fortress. Accordingly working parties were employed both on repairing the works and on mining them with a view to demolition. All this time Piedmontese irregulars were harassing the line of communication in the Val Stura, so that no less than 23 battalions were required to guard them, and both these troops and the army at Demonte suffered great privations from cold and the lack of supplies. At length on November 12 came an order from the Spanish Court to the Infant to destroy the fortress and immediately retreat into France. Thereupon the mines were completed and on the morning of the 14th the retreat began. In the afternoon, as the rear-

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guard marched away, the first mine was exploded and a portion of the rampart blown up. But Piedmontese troops made their way into the place before its demolition was completed. The allied rear-guard reached Argentera on November 16, having lost 100 men from the cold on the day on which it passed the Barricades. The guns, including those captured at Demonte, were all taken back in safety, and on November 19 the last allied soldier recrossed the Col de la Madeleine.

The troops then marched off to their winter quarters, the Spanish battalions to the county of Nice, the Swiss to Savoy, and the French, except those required to protect the guns left at Jausiers, to Provence and Languedoc. Conti started for Versailles on the 1st of December, and the Infant went for the winter to Nice. La Mina was recalled from the command of the army and disgraced.

In 1744 as in 1743, Charles Emmanuel had succeeded in resisting the efforts of the allied army to invade his Piedmontese dominions. It is true that he had lost the town of Nice and the southern portion of the county to which it belonged, but in the principal effort of the campaign the Franco-Spanish army had completely failed. Its collapse was the more striking at the end of a campaign which had seemed completely successful and when victory seemed to be within its grasp.

This was the last campaign in which Charles Emmanuel had the assistance of his great minister Ormea, whose health broke down in the autumn of 1744 and who died on June 24, 1745. 'In 1733 Ormea had freed Italy from the preponderance of Austria, in 1743 he preserved her from the dictatorship of the house of Bourbon.' He was succeeded as Minister of Foreign Affairs by the Marquis of Gorzegno.

In reviewing the operations for the passage of the Alps, we noted Bourcet's distinction between simple, or as it is nowadays called, passive defence, in which an army attempts to protect a wide extent of front by spreading its troops at the accessible points along the whole line to be defended, and that active defence which consists in keeping

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the army together, in holding it in a position difficult of attack from which it can strike the moment the opportunity offers against the enemy's communications, or against his army on the march. Bourcet explained the advantages of subdividing an army into what he called 'small parcels', which in a later age were called divisions, subject to the condition that the commander must always be able to reunite his army when required. It is not too much to say that the paramount principle in the conduct of war is to keep your army together. The perpetual refrain of Napoleon's writing is '*tenir son armée réunie*'. 'The principles of Caesar', he wrote at St. Helena, 'were the same as those of Alexander and of Hannibal—to keep his forces together, not to be vulnerable at any point, to move swiftly to the important points . . . to give himself all the possible chances of securing victory on the field of battle; for that purpose to bring on to it all his troops.'

An army united and ready to strike cannot be neglected by the enemy. When Charles Emmanuel was holding all the passes, Bourcet was able to show the Prince of Conti how to surprise and overwhelm him at one of them, and Charles Emmanuel's clever defences and formidable works could not prevent the 5,000 men whom he had disposed in and about the Barricades from being surrounded by 15,000. But his army, collected in a strong position at Sampeyre, not only perfectly protected the Val Varaita, but by its movement to San Damiano threatened a dangerous interruption of the siege of Demonte. When the defences of Demonte collapsed by the weakness of its commander and Charles Emmanuel moved to the edge of the plain, the whole of the great plain of Turin, except the little corner round Cuneo, was protected against the allied army, which dare not move forward to any distance lest it should be attacked in flank or rear. The presence of the Piedmontese army at Saluzzo, 20 miles away, made it impracticable for the Allies to throw their whole weight into the siege. They were obliged to keep half their army on the watch for it, and the attack at Madonna dell' Olmo, though repulsed, interrupted the siege at the

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critical moment, and gained the time which, in the geographical and climatic conditions, was all important.

It is at least a tenable view that on reaching the plain, the Allies would have done well to observe Cuneo with a small detachment, and to march the bulk of their army to the attack of Charles Emmanuel. If that enterprise had been successful, the siege of Cuneo would then have presented little difficulty.

The purpose of a fortress is to gain time, and to spare troops. This purpose was accomplished both by Demonte and Cuneo. Demonte was garrisoned by 1,100 men, of whom 1,000 surrendered. The force left to besiege the place was over 5,000, and until it was taken no attack on Cuneo was possible. Although Demonte surrendered prematurely, its siege had occupied a week, and cost the Allies elaborate preparations. Cuneo was defended to the end of the campaign by just over 3,000 men against half the allied army.

One advantage Charles Emmanuel had, which can hardly be over-estimated, the unity of command. The failure of the Allies is to be attributed mainly to their dissensions. The attack on the defences of Villefranche was delivered on April 19, and the castle of Villefranche surrendered on the 26th. But it was not till June 20 that the Allied armies began the march to Dauphiné. It cannot be said that the whole of these two months might have been gained, for the passes were not clear of snow before the beginning of July. But it seems probable that the start might well have been made two or three weeks sooner. This delay and the postponement of the attack on the Barricades from the 12th to the 17th of July, which, as well as the failure of the demonstration against Exilles, was attributable solely to La Mina's obstinacy, may fairly be considered to have saved Cuneo, which could hardly have held out for another three weeks. The disagreement between the Allies was, however, due not so much to military as to political causes, which ought to remind us that the supreme principle in the conduct of war is that policy and strategy should work hand in hand. A govern-

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ment in settling its foreign policy must at all times consider the means at its disposal, in case of a challenge, to make good its purpose. Every alliance which directly or indirectly commits a government to a possible war should be absolutely avoided unless apart from any alliance that war is indispensable for the preservation of the vital interests of its nation. The policy of Louis XV in the period we have reviewed was directed to no vital interest of France. Still less was the policy of Elizabeth Farnese aiming at anything of real importance to the Spanish nation.

vi. *Velletri. Retreat of Lobkowitz*

Lobkowitz, it will be remembered,[1] had halted his army on the 18th of March at Fermo, north of the Tronto. Bartenstein hearing of this halt had said 'time lost, everything lost'. On the 21st of April Lobkowitz received a letter from the Grand Duke Francis expressing the disappointment felt at Vienna with his delay, and with the letter came Maria Theresa's order to invade the kingdom of Naples. The Austrian Ambassador at Rome, Count Thun, Bishop of Gurk in Carinthia, sent word to Lobkowitz that the people of Naples would rise as soon as the Austrian army appeared, and suggested the plan of beginning the invasion from the Roman Campagna. Cardinal Aquaviva, who was in the Spanish interest, had some means of penetrating Thun's secrets, and sent word to Don Carlos that Lobkowitz would certainly not cross the Tronto but would cross the Apennines and march towards Rome.

Lobkowitz, after sending parties into the Apennines, collected his main body at Macerata and started on May 2 by two routes in successive fractions for Foligno. Thence he advanced by Spoleto to Civita Castellana, where his army was assembled by May 18, his troops demoralized by his indecision, which had also lost him the confidence of his generals.

[1] See p. 112.

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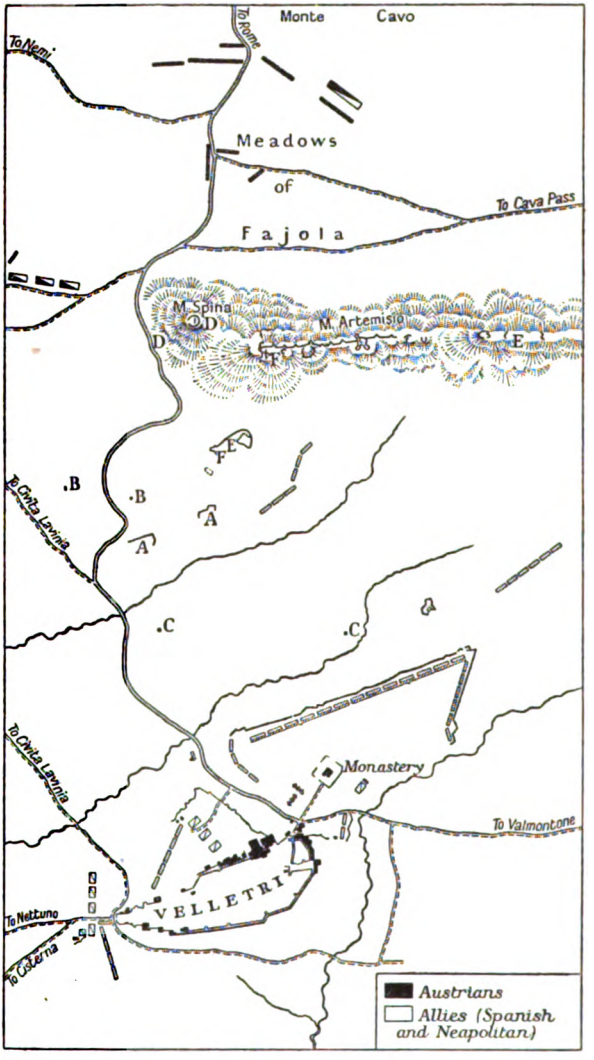
As soon as Don Carlos heard that Lobkowitz had left the coast he moved his own army from its camp by Lago Fucino to Cassino, on the road from Rome to Capua, and that of de Gages to Sora. These points were reached by the middle of May. By this time de Gages had convinced Don Carlos that it would be wiser to go forward to meet Lobkowitz in Papal territory than to wait to be attacked within his own frontier. Accordingly Don Carlos moved forward his army from Cassino to Anagni, where he was joined by de Gages from Sora.

At the same time Lobkowitz marched from Civita Castellana to Monte Rotondo, where he waited for a week, and whence he paid a visit to the Pope. During this time Don Carlos advanced to Valmontone, whereupon Lobkowitz moved from Monte Rotondo to Lunghezza, midway between Rome and Tivoli. The Austrian army had 14,000 infantry, and about 3,000 cavalry. Don Carlos had some 25,000 men of whom not more than 12,000 were Spanish. As no one had much faith in the Neapolitan troops the Austrian army was considered in both camps to be at least as strong as that of Don Carlos. The best way from Rome to Capua passed along the north side of the Alban hills, and of the Monte Lepini or Volscian hills, through Valmontone and Anagni. Another road went south of the Alban hills to Velletri, where it forked into two branches, one of them the old Appian way through the unhealthy Pontine marshes, the other, known as the courier route, skirting the south side of the Volscian hills. All three roads were commanded by the Alban hills, a circular ridge formed by the rim of an extinct volcano. If the Spaniards occupied these hills they would have a strong position in which to oppose an Austrian advance by any of the three roads. If the Austrians occupied them they would be able to turn whatever position the Spaniards might choose to bar their advance.

Don Carlos pushed forward towards Tivoli after a halt at Valmontone to bring up supplies for his troops.

Meanwhile Lobkowitz marched from Lunghezza to Frascati, his cavalry pushing back the Spanish cavalry.

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Velletri: Austrian and Spanish-Neapolitan Camps. (From a contemporary sketch given in the Austrian Staff history.) The black marks in Velletri are not troops but houses.

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Thereupon the Spanish army moved to Velletri. Lobkowitz advanced to Nemi, and on June 2 his advance guard occupied that part of the volcanic rim which overlooks Velletri, the position thus obtained consisting of the commanding southern end of Mont Artemisio and of Mont Spina, the prolongation of the same ridge to the south-west. For a fortnight the two armies watched each other.

On the 17th of June, de Gages, urged on by Don Carlos, arranged a dawn attack on the Austrian positions on the ridge. It was well executed by his subordinates and the Austrians were driven both from the southern end of Mont Artemisio and from its western prolongation, Mont Spina. De Gages, coming on to the ridge at the critical moment when his troops were pressing after the retreating Austrians, recalled them, with the result that the Austrians made a counter-attack and recovered their position on Mont Spina. Next day the Austrians entrenched themselves on Mont Spina and the Spaniards on Mont Artemisio. Neither side ventured a fresh attack. The Spaniards remained at Velletri and the Austrians at Nemi, while their outposts, entrenched each on its own part of the ridge, bombarded one another, the Spaniards eventually having the benefit of a battery of heavy guns brought up with much labour from the Neapolitan arsenals.

Don Carlos and de Gages thought that Lobkowitz had been well beaten on June 17 and must retreat. The Austrians had no such impression. Lobkowitz, at a great distance from his base in Lombardy, shirked the risk of another battle and thought he could dislodge de Gages, partly by using his cavalry to intercept the Spanish convoys, and by cutting off the water-supply of Velletri, which indeed caused the Spaniards great inconvenience, more effectively by provoking an insurrection in the Kingdom of Naples. He had left at Ascoli on the Tronto Colonel Soro with a battalion of irregulars, and he now instructed that officer to march with his battalion into the Neapolitan Abruzzi, and there to proclaim Maria Theresa

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as Queen of Naples. The proclamation had been drawn up by Cardinal Thun, who put Soro into communication with a number of local personages believed to be Austrian sympathizers. As there were no Neapolitan troops left in the Abruzzi, Soro with his handful of men overran a great part of the province and succeeded in inducing a number of the small towns to accept the new régime offered them. Maria Theresa was proclaimed at Teramo, Penne, Giulianova, Atri, and Aquila. A second small Austrian column under Count Gorano had been sent from Tivoli into the Abruzzi and taken Tagliacozzo and Avezzano. By the middle of June the whole district of the Abruzzi seemed to have been brought over to the Austrian side, and Cardinal Thun urged Lobkowitz to send a body of regular troops to support what he believed to be a successful insurrection. Lobkowitz thought that he could spare no troops and was convinced that no really influential persons had been won over, so that Soro and Gorano received no reinforcements. Soro was besieging the Castle of Aquila, to the relief of which the Neapolitan commandant of Pescara sent a body of infantry and dragoons. Soro marched to meet them, and in the skirmish which ensued was wounded and had to be carried to Ascoli. At the beginning of July, Don Carlos sent 3,000 men under the Duke of Vieuville into the Abruzzi, and by the end of the month the small parties of Austrian troops had left the province and the insurrection was suppressed.

Maria Theresa had been pressing the British Government for the help of the fleet in her enterprise against Naples, with the result that in July, Commodore Long with seven ships appeared off the mouth of the Tiber, and himself went to confer with Lobkowitz at that general's headquarters. It was arranged that Long should collect at Leghorn and at Civita Vecchia transports for 2,000 men, who, under the command of the Austrian General Browne, were to be landed in Neapolitan territory. Soon afterwards came urgent messages from Charles Emmanuel asking for reinforcements in view of the pending attack on Piedmont by the army of the Infant. Lobkowitz then

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determined to attack the Spaniards before his army should be weakened by sending off troops to Piedmont, and without waiting for Long's transports.

Three-quarters of the Spanish and Neapolitan infantry lay in an entrenched camp outside and to the north of the town of Velletri, and from this camp were furnished the troops, four or five battalions, which garrisoned the works on Mont Artemisio. The remaining quarter of the infantry and all the cavalry were encamped also outside the town on both sides of its southern end. The Spaniards were far from vigilant and Lobkowitz therefore hoped to surprise them. The main camp to the north of the town could hardly be rushed, and the way to it passed too close to Mont Artemisio for surprise to be possible in that quarter. Lobkowitz decided on an attempt against the camp at the south end of the town. A deserter undertook to guide a column, unseen, to the southern gate of Velletri. It was known that the King of Naples was quartered at the Palazzo Ginetti about the middle of the western side of the town. Lobkowitz, who seems to have relied on any expedient other than battle, hit upon the idea of ending the war by kidnapping the King of Naples, the Duke of Modena, and de Gages, who were all believed to be living in the same quarter. He told off 4,500 foot and 1,500 horse under Browne, his best general, to surprise the enemy's southern camp, to enter the town, and capture the King. A second column of about the same strength was to demonstrate against Mont Artemisio, and the third, also about 5,000 men, was to turn Mont Artemisio and to attack the main camp at the north end of the town. A fourth body of 3,000 or 4,000 men formed the reserve.

The columns started in the night of the 10th of August to deliver their attack at dawn on the 11th. Browne reached the southern camp unobserved, easily dispersed the cavalry and so much of the infantry as was near the town gate, which his troops broke open, and pushed right through the town. The King of Naples and the Duke of Modena, awakened by the firing, had just time to escape half-dressed to the main camp. Once in the town the

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Austrian troops finding themselves unopposed broke into the houses and began to plunder, so that it was impracticable for their officers to collect a body to hold the north gate. Accordingly, the Spanish generals in the north camp, which was by this time alarmed, sent one body of troops into the town, where began a series of desperate street fights, and another body along the western side of the town to rally the previously dispersed infantry and cavalry. Browne had kept part of his force in hand outside the southern gate. He had asked Lobkowitz for reinforcements, which were refused. He realized that his troops in the town might be cut off, so he recalled them and marched back to the Austrian camp, taking with him as prisoners eighty-seven officers and five hundred men. He was followed by the enemy's cavalry, which however did not venture to attack him.

The second column had come within attacking distance of Mont Artemisio, but, as its mission was merely to demonstrate, had made no serious attack when the third column, in its turning movement, came up on to the ridge north of Artemisio. The officer commanding this third column, looking down on Velletri, saw Browne's force retreating. He judged that it was now too late to attack the main Spanish camp, so he turned to his right to attack Mont Artemisio. His leading troops were already in the front trenches when he was attacked in flank by a brigade which had marched straight up the ridge from the main Spanish camp; other troops from the main camp reinforced the defenders of Mont Artemisio, and the Austrian general receiving no reinforcements withdrew his troops in good order, an attempted Spanish pursuit being checked by a detachment sent by Lobkowitz from the reserve to cover the retreat. Soon after 9 a.m. the whole Austrian army was back in its camp. The combined army had lost about 4,000 men, killed, wounded, and prisoners, the Austrians about half as many.

Nothing is more difficult than to secure the simultaneous action of several columns moving by different routes to attack a position from different directions. The third

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Austrian column reached the ridge an hour late owing to insufficient knowledge of the ground. If it had been in time and had attacked the north camp at the moment of Browne's attack on the southern camp, the Spanish army could hardly have escaped a disastrous defeat. But even as it was, Lobnowitz would probably have gained a victory if he had boldly used his reserve to support either Browne's column or the attack on Mont Artemisio.

Lobkowitz was to have no more opportunities. A few days later transports which had evaded the vigilance of the British fleet landed 3,000 Spanish troops between Naples and Gaeta.

The capture of the Barricades and the action of Pietra Lunga (17 and 19 June) revealed to Maria Theresa a danger which she had not hitherto fully realized. If the Infant's army should take Cuneo and defeat Charles Emmanuel it would be impossible to defend the Duchies of Lombardy, where her general, Pallavicini, had only 2,000 troops, half of them militia, just about to be reinforced by 2,000 Croats. She understood, what fifty years later her grandson Francis II was never able to grasp, that the defence of Piedmont was the only possible defence of Lombardy against a French invasion. She ordered Pallavicini to march with all his regular troops, by this time some 3,000 men, to join Charles Emmanuel. It was impossible for her to send troops from Austria, for on the 7th of August she received the ultimatum of Frederick of Prussia, who on the 15th began the second Silesian war by the invasion of Saxony. This compelled her to recall to Bohemia the army of Charles of Lorraine, who had to abandon that invasion of Alsace which in June had brought Louis XV from Flanders to Metz. It was fortunate for her that Louis on recovering from his illness failed to follow up Prince Charles and contented himself with the siege of Freibourg. She could not yet bring herself to abandon the enterprise against Naples, but she ordered Lobkowitz to send a good German infantry regiment by sea to Piedmont, suggesting that it might be embarked at Ancona.

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On receiving this order Lobkowitz called a council of war (August 16), which decided that after sending away a regiment he must abandon the project of embarking Browne with part of his force on Long's transports to be landed on the Neapolitan coast. The transports, however, which were waiting at Fiumicino at the mouth of the Tiber, could be used to carry troops to Piedmont and accordingly the regiment of Pallavicini was sent off and embarked, after the delay, characteristic of Lobkowitz, on September 6th. It had only 573 men, who were landed on September 18th at Loano and marched to Mondovi.

At the end of August Maria Theresa wrote to Lobkowitz instructing him that if he did not see his way to striking a blow against Naples he must immediately retreat with a view to the defence of Lombardy. About the same time Admiral Rowley, who had succeeded Mathews, informed Lobkowitz that he was instructed to assist him against Naples. Lobkowitz replied that he could do nothing against Naples unless he had the assistance of the whole of Rowley's fleet, thus revealing his complete inability to grasp the situation. Rowley, however, readily agreed to undertake the transport by sea of 2,500 Austrian sick and of the heavy guns which would have encumbered the retreat. On the 7th of September the Queen instructed Lobkowitz to retreat immediately unless he saw his way to a prompt victory. He was to leave 10,000 men to cover Tuscany against Spanish attack and with the rest of his army to march to the help of the King of Sardinia. Lobkowitz received this letter on the 15th of September.

A further order dated October 19, after Maria Theresa had heard of the battle of Madonna dell' Olmo, instructed Lobkowitz at once to send all possible troops to Piedmont, keeping only what was required to cover Tuscany and Lombardy. Thereupon Lobkowitz sent off and embarked the sick and wounded, his heavy guns and the bulk of his baggage. The rest of his train he sent off to Civita Castellana to be covered by Count Soro with his irregular battalion and some hussars, altogether some 900 men. The train formed a column of 700 wagons and 800 lame horses.

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At the same time Lobkowitz had a bridge of boats thrown across the Tiber beside the Ponte Molle, just above Rome.

Lobkowitz had reached Nemi at the beginning of June with 17,000 men; since then he had received reinforcements amounting to 5,000. He now had 11,000 men. The Spanish-Neapolitan army confronting him was about 20,000 strong. The problem for Lobkowitz was to retreat without being attacked or overtaken. For once he had good luck. He had made everything ready for starting on the 1st of November. On the 31st of October the Duke of Modena was entertaining the French Ambassador at a dinner on Mont Artemisio, and one of his aide-de-camps thought it a good opportunity to kidnap an Austrian outpost on the slope of that hill. He managed to surprise and capture the post, but not before the neighbouring piquets had been alarmed. Lobkowitz seized the opportunity to draw out his army as if for attack, completing the movement before dark. After midnight he marched off, and on the afternoon of November 1 was eleven miles away. This gave him a good start as his departure could not be discovered before dawn and many hours were required before the Spanish army could be put on the road. Next day Lobkowitz marched outside the walls of Rome and across the Tiber by the Ponte Molle and the bridge of boats to Aquatraversa, leaving a rear-guard at the bridges, which were reached by the Spanish advance-guard. On the 3rd the Austrian rear-guard destroyed the bridges and thus prevented further immediate pursuit. Thereupon Don Carlos, after paying his respects to the Pope, went back to Naples with some 2,000 of his own troops, leaving de Gages with 18,000 men, of whom about a third were Neapolitan troops under the command of Vieuville.

Before leaving Nemi Lobkowitz had the news of the abandonment of the siege of Cuneo and of the retreat of the Infant's army. It was therefore no longer urgent that he should relieve Charles Emmanuel, so, after crossing the Tiber, he decided not to continue his march by the shortest route through Spoleto and Foligno, but to go to Viterbo,

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where he would cover Tuscany against a possible Spanish invasion. He ordered Soro to escort the baggage train by the Spoleto route and set off on the 4th with his army from Aquatraversa for Viterbo. He reached Ronciglione on the 6th and there halted for a rest day.

De Gages, having repaired the bridges, followed him on the 5th and on the 7th reached Monterosi. Lobkowitz with his generals had a good view of the Spanish position, which was ill chosen and lent itself to attack. The Austrian position was a strong one and the question was raised whether there was not now a good opportunity to settle with the Spaniards. The Spanish position invited attack; the Austrian position promised success in case the Spaniards should attack it. Browne was all for attacking. He felt sure of success, in which case only the relics of the Spanish army would be able to recross the Tiber. But the majority of the generals were for continuing the retreat and Lobkowitz agreed with them. On the 8th the army marched twelve miles to Viterbo. On the 9th de Gages advanced to Ronciglione and called a council of war, which decided not to attack Lobkowitz at Viterbo, but to go back to Monterosi and to cut off the Austrian retreat by taking the road through Spoleto and Foligno. But de Gages did not go back to Monterosi till the 12th, the day on which Lobkowitz resumed his march to reach Orvieto on the 14th. There he heard of de Gages' movement, so he continued his march up the Tiber valley to Perugia, which was reached on the 18th. De Gages reached Foligno on the 17th with an army exhausted by marching forty-three miles in three days and therefore needing rest.

Count Soro, with the train of 700 wagons, had reached Foligno on the 13th of November. The route from Foligno was by the pass of Colfiorito to Serravalle, Tolentino, and Macerata. On the 14th they reached Serravalle, and Soro halted his covering force at the pass of Colfiorito, which he proposed to hold until the wagons should be so far on their way that it would be impossible for the Spaniards to overtake them. On the morning of the

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16th he received from Lobkowitz instructions that as soon as the wagons were out of danger he was to block the road from Foligno to Cagli in order to delay the Spanish advance as long as possible. The purpose, of course, was to prevent the Spaniards anticipating Lobkowitz at Scheggia, through which he must pass on his way from Perugia to Cagli. Soro immediately marched from Colfiorito over the hills to Nocera, which his advance-guard reached soon after midday and his main body in the evening. The inhabitants implored him to choose some other point for his defence so as to spare them the horrors of an attack by the Spaniards, whose advance-guard under Vieuville had reached Foligno that day, but Soro, rightly judging that no other spot would so well suit his purpose, made all preparations to defend himself in Nocera. That evening Vieuville at Foligno heard of Soro's arrival and next day marched with his advance-guard, 1,200 Neapolitans, to attack him. De Gages, on reaching Foligno, sent reinforcements to Vieuville. On the 17th Soro repulsed all Vieuville's attacks. On the 18th de Gages came up with more Spanish troops. Vieuville sent to de Gages for guns and meantime called upon Soro to surrender. Soro offered to surrender the town on condition that he might march off with his men unmolested and not pursued for a whole day. Vieuville required unconditional surrender, whereupon Soro consulted his men, some of whom were Spanish deserters. He himself was a Catalan, and both for that reason and because of his guerrilla exploits, obnoxious to the Spaniards. The irregulars had a sad record of cruelty, and de Gages the year before had issued an order that no quarter was to be given to deserters. Soro's men declared that they would fight to the death. In the afternoon de Gages came up with more troops and a battery, which, firing at short range, had by evening destroyed the town gate, but Soro had built barricades behind the gate and was ready to resist an assault. Next morning, the 19th, de Gages, who had already lost 200 men and saw that an assault would cost him further heavy loss, decided to set the place on fire

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by bombardment. The townspeople begged Soro to save them and their property by surrender, and Soro's men nobly agreed to sacrifice themselves for the inhabitants. Soro hoisted the white flag and asked de Gages to grant an amnesty to the deserters. This was refused, and 800 men and 36 officers were taken in fetters to Foligno. De Gages set his troops to plunder the town, a piece of brutality which contrasted with the magnanimity of his prisoners who had sacrificed themselves in vain. Next day at Foligno de Gages, after setting free on parole 13 officers and 110 men, hanged every fifth man of the 400 deserters ; 40 of the irregulars were shot, and the survivors sent to Gaeta with such bad treatment that 85 of them died on the way. The rest were sent to the galleys and the officers treated with great hardship, especially Soro, who was excepted from the exchange of prisoners negotiated nine months later. Lobkowitz, whose orders had been bravely carried out, when he heard of the disastrous end was heartless enough to write to Vienna that it was Soro's fault.

On the 22nd de Gages marched from Foligno to Assisi, where he posted his army in a defensive position facing towards Perugia and proceeded to entrench. Lobkowitz, on hearing of his approach, placed his army in position across the road to Gubbio, between the Tiber and the Chiaggio. Next day he marched away and following the road by Gubbio, Cagli, and the Furlo pass, reached Fano on the 28th, having marched 65 miles in six days of which one was a rest day. Here he quartered his troops in the district behind the Metaurus until the end of December, when he moved into winter quarters about Faenza with his outposts from the sea at Cesenetico through Cesena to the hills south of Forli.

De Gages went no farther than Perugia. After a fortnight's rest there he marched back to Orvieto and in that region distributed his army in winter quarters.

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VI. SUCCESS OF MAILLEBOIS

i. *Appointment of d'Argenson. Genoa joins France and Spain. Treaty of Aranjuez. Preparations for the New Campaign.*

In April 1744 Louis dismissed Amelot, who had succeeded Chauvelin as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. For some months the office remained vacant; Louis would consult his older friends, especially Marshal de Noailles, and then himself give his instructions to Du Theil, the senior member of the Foreign Office staff. In November 1744 he found it necessary to appoint a successor to Amelot. Nothing better shows the King's good intentions and his breadth of view than his choice for this office of the Marquis d'Argenson, the elder brother of the capable Secretary of State for War. The Marquis d'Argenson was one of the best minds of France. As a young man he had been a member of a political and philosophical Society, the Club de l'Entresol, of which the Abbé de Saint Pierre was the leading spirit and one of the members Levesque de Champeaux, of whom we shall hear more. At thirty d'Argenson had been appointed Intendant of Hainault and for four years administered that province with marked efficiency. Then in sixteen years of unofficial life he had developed views on the subject of government which anticipated those that a generation later pervaded the constituent assembly. His separation from his wife and his intimacy with other men's wives neither interfered with his political speculations nor tainted his incorruptibility. The defect in d'Argenson's equipment was his lack of touch with his fellow men and with the realities of political life. At fifty he was enclosed in the impenetrable armour of the political system which he had thought out. The Court wits were near the mark

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when they said that he had dropped into the Foreign Office out of Plato's Republic. Unfortunately, in regard to Foreign Affairs, his system was incompatible with the policy to which France was committed, and which therefore it was the minister's business to promote. For him the great rule that should govern the foreign policy of France was contained in the words of Richelieu's *Political Testament*, 'To diminish the power of Austria to the point when the Emperor will have no more territory than the richest Elector.' He could not see that the rule derived from Richelieu's precept had lost its point when the Treaty of Utrecht had given to Louis XIV the direction of Spanish policy. The friend and disciple of Chauvelin, d'Argenson was bent upon carrying out that statesman's plan of expelling the Austrians from Italy, and of setting up in that country a confederation of equal states among which France would exercise such a preponderating influence as had been acquired by Richelieu in the affairs of Germany. He disapproved of the family compact with Spain and of the subservience of the French to the Spanish Court. He thought it the interest of France to strengthen the King of Sardinia and to keep on good terms with him, for without the alliance of the doorkeeper of the Alps it would not be easy to drive out the Austrians from Lombardy. But Louis XV, committed to the offensive with a large army in Flanders and with a second army on the Rhine, had not enough troops for a large army in Italy also. He thought that the force told off for Italy was sufficient to give the combined army the necessary superiority over Charles Emmanuel, and in this his judgement was sound. It was for him in his dealing with the Spanish Court to support with the weight of his own authority the judgement of his chosen commander. This was the more necessary as the failure of the previous campaign had been due to the reluctance of the Spanish commander to accept the plans of his French colleague.

At the time of d'Argenson's appointment, however, there could be no question of that minister's realizing his own ideas, as the French and Spanish Courts were about to be

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brought into still closer connexion by the marriage of the Dauphin to the Infanta Maria Theresa, a match which had been arranged by Fleury in 1739, at the same time as that between Don Philip and Marie Louise. The marriage was celebrated at Versailles, February 23, 1745. It was on the occasion of this wedding that Louis made the acquaintance of the lady who, as Madame de Pompadour, was to have the preponderant influence on his policy and on the choice of his ministers. She was quick to detect the weakness of d'Argenson's character as well as his opposition to herself.

In June 1744, when the Prince of Conti had rejected the Spanish proposals for an advance by the Genoese Riviera, Philip V had opened negotiations with Genoa.

The attitude of Genoa was a survival, the relic of an earlier epoch. Her greatness had been due to the advantages of her site; her decline, to changes that affected the whole world. Her capacious harbour, with no nearer rival than Spezia and Toulon, is enclosed between the two spurs of a great protecting hill, forming a natural bulwark, and between the two rivers that wash the outer slopes of these spurs. The great gulf of which the harbour of Genoa lies at the head is enclosed by the vast semicircle of the Apennines. This mountain belt hardly ever shrinks to a width of less than twenty miles, and though in the eighty miles from Genoa to the Col di Tenda there are some seven or eight passes over the chain, only two of them cross the crest at a height less than 2,000 feet above the sea. Before the end of the eighteenth century there was no cart-road over any of these passes, so that it was always easier from any point on the coast to take goods by boat to Genoa than by mule to Piedmont. Genoa was the nearest port to Milan and the rich plain of Lombardy. These conditions early led to wealth and power. The whole coast-land from the Magra to the Roja became Genoese territory except the enclaves of Finale, which belonged to the Emperor, and of Oneglia, which belonged to the Duke of Savoy. Until the end of the fifteenth century Genoa was the great

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sea-power of the western Mediterranean, but her territory was small, and though it gave her an inexhaustible supply of sailors she could never raise a large army.

With the rise of the great powers it became her interest to ally herself with that one of them which in return for the assistance of her galleys could protect her from attack by land, and in the great conflict between the Kings of France and the House of Habsburg she played a decisive part. At the beginning of the struggle she took the French side, but her commercial interests tied her to Lombardy. When in 1528 the Genoese Admiral, Andrea Doria, who had been fighting for the French, came to an agreement with Charles V, the supremacy of the House of Habsburg in Italy was assured. Atlantic trade and the introduction of the fast sailing ship armed with guns made an end of the predominance of galleys, which were suitable only to the Mediterranean, and the relative importance of Genoa diminished. She particularly dreaded the ambition of the House of Savoy, which aimed both at the acquisition of Milan, where lay her commercial interests, and of Finale, which she was always eager to incorporate into her own territories. Both Charles Emmanuel I and Charles Emmanuel II had attacked Genoa without success, so that there was a traditional enmity between Genoa and Savoy. It was revived when Charles Emmanuel III, by the treaty of Worms, obtained from Maria Theresa an undertaking to assist him in obtaining a port on the Mediterranean. That could only refer to Finale, which Genoa thirty years before had obtained by purchase from the Emperor Charles. As soon as this clause of the treaty became known, the bitterness of the Genoese against the House of Savoy was intensified and was extended to the Empress Queen who had accepted the treaty.

Accordingly in June 1744 Genoa lent a willing ear to the overtures of Philip V. As she had neglected her army she was hardly in a position to defend her own territories. If she should join France and Spain she might be attacked by Charles Emmanuel before she could be assisted by either power. The negotiations with Spain

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were therefore kept as secret as possible in order that Genoa might cloak her military preparations under the guise of neutrality.

An agreement was easily reached. By its terms the Genoese were to hire guns to the Allies, to give them facilities for supplying their army, and to put into the field 10,000 infantry. In return the King of Spain was to pay Genoa a subsidy of 30,000 piastres a month (£5,375), and the Allies were to conquer for Genoa a number of specified places in the Apennines. They were to keep in Piedmont or Montferrat an army superior to that of Charles Emmanuel, were to besiege Alessandria and Tortona, and to keep a covering army between those places and the Piedmontese army. Until that covering army was in position the treaty was to be kept secret.

Upon these stipulations were based the French, Spanish, and Genoese preparations made during the winter 1744–5 for the campaign of 1745, though, in order to give plausibility to the pretence of Genoese neutrality, the treaty embodying them was not signed until May 1, 1745, at Aranjuez.

Supplies were accumulated in the county of Nice and along the Genoese Riviera. The Spanish army in Savoy, Nice, and Provence was strengthened by the exchange of fresh battalions for those that had been too much reduced in strength as well as by the dispatch of recruits to the others. The Spanish troops were to form a field army of 38 battalions and 38 squadrons (32,000 men), and a garrison of 10 battalions, 3 Spanish and 7 Swiss (5,000 men) in Savoy. The French had 25 or 26 battalions and 35 squadrons for the field army (of which 2 or 3 battalions were to be in garrison at Lyons until the disturbances there came to an end), besides 8 to guard the artillery left at Jausiers, 11 at Barcelonnette to protect Dauphiné, and 6 to protect the coast of Provence. The Genoese were to reinforce the combined army with 6 battalions. These arrangements would produce a total of 70 battalions and 73 squadrons. All this was agreed upon in January and confirmed in April.

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The army of de Gages, which, together with the rest of the Genoese contingent and with a Neapolitan contingent, was expected to be 25,000 strong, was to move by the Riviera di Levante to Genoa and to undertake the siege of Tortona, while the Franco-Spanish army under the Infant Don Philip was to invade Piedmont from the Riviera di Ponente, descend the Tanaro, besiege Ceva and Mondovi, and advance on Cherasco. The artillery for the sieges of Tortona, Ceva, and Mondovi was to be supplied from Genoa, and the Infant was to cover the route from Genoa along the Riviera di Ponente.

It is hardly surprising that after his painful experience of constant friction with the Spaniards the Prince of Conti did not return to the army of Italy. Good relations between the two armies were assisted by the recall of La Mina. Conti was given the command in Germany of the army which during the winter had been operating between the lower Main and the Rhine under Marshal Maillebois, who replaced him in command of the combined army of Italy, still under the nominal command of the Infant.

Jean Baptiste François Desmarets, Marquis de Maillebois, grandson of Colbert, was now in his sixty-third year. As a young man he had served under Villars and had greatly distinguished himself in 1708 at the siege of Lille. During the Italian campaigns of the war of the Polish succession he had showed marked ability in the command of a division and had acquired an intimate knowledge of the Italian theatre of war, where he had besieged and taken Tortona. After some years as Governor of Dauphiné he was sent in 1739 with French troops to assist the Genoese in the suppression of the rising in Corsica, and had accomplished this difficult task in the incredibly short space of three weeks. At the beginning of the war of the Austrian succession he had been given the command of the army of observation on the Hanoverian border. Instructed to march to Bohemia for the relief of the forces which under Belle-Isle and Broglie were surrounded at Prague, he was prevented by positive orders on no account

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to risk a battle from effecting his junction with their army. The fact that his hands had been tied was of course not known either to the French public or to the Spanish Court, and Philip and Elizabeth, perhaps not unnaturally in the circumstances, failed to realize that Louis had chosen for the command of the combined army an officer whose high rank was justified by exceptional ability, and whose experience specially qualified him to direct operations in the Italian theatre of war.

Maillebois's Quartermaster-General was his son, the Comte de Maillebois (son-in-law of the Marquis d'Argenson), who had served the Prince of Conti in the same capacity. Both the Marshal and his son gave their full confidence to Bourcet, who continued to serve as Assistant Quartermaster-General. The Marshal left his head-quarters in Germany on the 13th of April and travelled to Aix and thence to Antibes.

The instructions given to Maillebois seem to have been based on a memorandum of his own. At any rate they express his own views which had been submitted either by himself or his son to the Marquis d'Argenson, and by him communicated to the Spanish ambassador, Campo-Florido.

They recite 'that Louis XV wishing to give Spain increasing proof of his attachment to the principles that induced him to conclude the Treaty of Fontainebleau, tending to the establishment of a Prince of the House of Bourbon in Lombardy, agrees that a portion of the troops on his frontiers of Provence and Dauphiné are to join the army of the Infant under the orders of the Maréchal de Maillebois to co-operate towards the fulfilment of the views relating to the purpose of the alliance between the two crowns'. After enumerating the forces under the Marshal's command, the King says that he adopts the plan of an advance by the Maritime Alps, on condition that the operations should begin by the sieges of Tortona, Ceva, Mondovi, and Saorgio, places indispensable for the support of the army in Piedmont and for the maintenance of the alliance with Genoa. Tortona is to be besieged by the

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army of de Gages; Ceva, Mondovi, and Saorgio by the army of the Infant. If these enterprises succeed they will pave the way for further conquests in the plain of Piedmont.

Maillebois may concert further operations with the Infant provided they accord with the rules of war and offer probability of success; the objects must be to weaken the power of the King of Sardinia and to establish the Infant in Lombardy, always provided that the first conquests are held safe and communications with France by the coast are protected. The interests of France would be met by the siege of Cuneo, for which the Marshal may press, but it must be preceded by the occupation of Cairo. He may besiege Alessandria if he thinks it more suitable.

Instead of the siege of Cuneo, a diversion upon Exilles by the French and Spanish troops in Dauphiné and Savoy may be attempted in order to facilitate operations in Piedmont.

The Marshal is not to agree to a diversion into the Milanese unless it is justified by quick success in the preliminary operations and unless the forces suffice to cover the communications by the Riviera.

The Marshal is to keep his own troops together, but not to oppose the separation of the Spaniards and Genoese from them unless that would so weaken them as to imperil success. To prevent such a separation he must in that case make full use of all the powers given him and threaten to fall back on the French frontier. He is not to reinforce with French troops the armies of the Infant and de Gages if they undertake an operation at a distance from him.

In case the Queen of Hungary should very greatly reinforce her army the Marshal may consent to the Infant's reinforcing de Gages even with the whole of his Spanish troops. But he must in no case allow this reinforcement to be accompanied by any French battalions; the French troops are always to operate together as a whole.

The French and Spanish troops are not to be mixed together, but the French to be kept separate.

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These instructions reveal a certain divergence of views. The King is determined to join Spain in the effort to establish a Bourbon prince in Lombardy; that is his great aim, which is also that of Elizabeth Farnese. But his general is to make his first business the defeat of the Piedmontese army because that is the way prescribed by the rules of war to attain the aim. Elizabeth Farnese does not appreciate the rules of war, and means her army as soon as possible to invade and occupy the Duchies of Parma and Milan without first overthrowing the power of Charles Emmanuel.

Louis foresees that the Spanish General's instructions will very soon lead him to these Duchies, while the French plan insists on the postponement of their invasion until after the defeat of the Piedmontese army. This disagreement was bound to cause trouble.

The large outlines of Maillebois's plan are best conveyed by a passage written by Pezay in his history published thirty years later.

'More than one motive determined M. de Maillebois to advance preferably by the Riviera of Genoa; this route brought him into a favourable position to carry out the clauses of the treaty requiring him to cover the territory of Genoa. He wished also on entering Piedmontese territory to profit at once by his superior force to fight the King of Sardinia at an advantage and to compel him if possible *to retire towards* Turin. In that case the Marshal's plan was to undertake behind his army by detachments the Sieges of Ceva, Mondovi, and all the small places on the Bormida and in the mountains, while he would be attacking Tortona and Alessandria in force and opening the doors of Montferrat. Lastly, this plan, which was truly military, gave hopes in favourable circumstances of soon forcing the King of Sardinia to renounce the alliance of the Queen of Hungary.

The communication from the Var to the Tanaro was long, so Maillebois hit upon the idea of shortening it by taking Exilles and opening a shorter communication by the valley of the Dora Riparia. In that case the French General could collect his forces, crush the King of Sardinia or compel him to make a separate peace, and then in either case drive the Austrians out of Piacenza, Parma, and the Milanese, and push them to the mountains of Tyrol.'

What gives peculiar importance to the plan thus sketched

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is that its leading ideas are also those of Napoleon's campaign of 1796. His plan, like that of Maillebois, was to enter Piedmont from the Genoese Riviera, to separate the Sardinians from the Austrians, to crush the Sardinian army and dictate a separate peace to the King of Sardinia; then to open a new communication by the Valley of the Dora Riparia and, thus strengthened, to turn against the Austrians and drive them out of the Milanese into the mountains of Tyrol. This has always been thought the most brilliant and the most original of Napoleon's campaigns. Modern research has shown that before 1796 Napoleon was familiar with the history of the war of the Austrian succession and with the volumes of Pezay in which are recorded the campaigns both of Conti and of Maillebois. It is thus certain that Napoleon was the disciple or pupil of his predecessors, especially of Maillebois. Perhaps the most striking difference between the French operations of 1745 and those of 1796 is the amazing rapidity of Napoleon's movements.

This was due partly no doubt to the great improvement and simplification of tactics which had been achieved in the interval in the French army and to the substitution of the system of requisition for the cumbrous machinery of magazines, but also in great measure to the startling promptitude of all Napoleon's decisions. But even Napoleon's exceptional concentration of mind would hardly have divined in an instant the correct solution of the problem presented by each new situation without the preparation involved in following the solution of almost identical problems recorded in the papers of Maillebois and his assistants.

The records of Maillebois's campaign reveal a perfection of method which no head-quarters has ever surpassed. Whenever it was necessary to direct the general movements of the army, that is to say at the beginning of the campaign and at every new situation, a memorandum was written giving an analysis of the situation and a statement of the best move by which to meet it. This memorandum would be prepared either by Maillebois himself or, after

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discussion with him, by the Quartermaster-General or his assistant. Upon the basis of the decision thus set forth a letter was written to each general in command of a body of troops required to act separately from the main body, explaining to him the nature of the mission assigned to him, and embodying such information and such suggestions as might help him to carry out the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief. Both the memorandum and the letters of instruction were of course confidential. Besides them, formal orders were issued every day to every marching column and detailed orders before every expected or intended action. The most important of these papers were published by Pezay and read by Napoleon, who by their aid could follow the working of Maillebois's mind throughout the campaign. He could hardly have had a better introduction to what used to be called 'the sublime parts of the art of war'.

In 1744 Conti had been obliged to attack Piedmont from the west across her strong Alpine frontier. But the alliance of Genoa made it possible for Maillebois to attack Piedmont from the south-east where there was no such strong natural barrier. He was to have the co-operation of the army of de Gages, who for that purpose was to bring his army to Genoa. We left de Gages at Orvieto, where he had gone into winter quarters after chasing Lobkowitz from Velletri to the Adriatic. Whether he would be able to go to Genoa would depend to some extent on the Austrian army to which he was opposed.

In 1745 Maria Theresa was bent upon the recovery of Silesia. In November 1744 Traun had driven Frederick out of Bohemia, and the new year began with the death of the Emperor Charles VII (January 20), which was quickly followed by the expulsion of the French from Bavaria. It was natural, therefore, that the high-spirited queen should hope to recover her lost province and to be avenged on the King of Prussia who had treated her so badly. Upon Silesia, therefore, and upon the election of the Grand Duke, her husband, as Emperor, her heart was set; she would have to concentrate her forces in

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Bohemia and could spare no reinforcements for Italy. She was thoroughly dissatisfied with Lobkowitz, and it was only the insistence of his friends, especially of Bartenstein, that had postponed his dismissal.

Lobkowitz had his winter quarters in the neighbourhood of Faenza, with his advance-guard between Rimini and Pesaro. In April, after receiving Neapolitan reinforcements under the Duc de la Vieuville, de Gages moved to the Adriatic coast, whereupon Lobkowitz fell back to Modena followed by de Gages, who first moved on Spilamberto against the Austrian right and then marched round to Bomporto for an attack on the Austrian left. At this moment he received orders to take his army to Genoa for the new campaign which had been planned. He sent off his artillery to Orbetello to be there embarked, and when it was well on the march, moved his army across the Apennines to Castelnuovo and through the territory of Massa to Sarzana (May 6), in Genoese territory.

Meanwhile, Maria Theresa had at length recalled Lobkowitz. Schulenburg, his successor in command, sent light troops by Pontremoli in pursuit, but de Gages crossed the Magra, covered against the Austrians by a rear-guard, and reached the Gulf of Spezia on May 11. The further march of the Spaniards through the defile of Sestri was protected by a flank-guard in the hills, and on May 18 the advance parties of de Gages reached San Pier d'Arena, Rivarolo, and Campomorone.

ii. *Campaign of Maillebois. Battle of Bassignana*

By the close of May the French and Spanish forces had reached their places of assembly. The Spanish and Neapolitan troops of de Gages, some 15,000 strong, were in the neighbourhood of Genoa, ready to move northwards by the pass of the Bocchetta (about 3,000 feet high), and the Genoese army (10,000 men) was ready to follow them as soon as the Genoese Government would give the order.

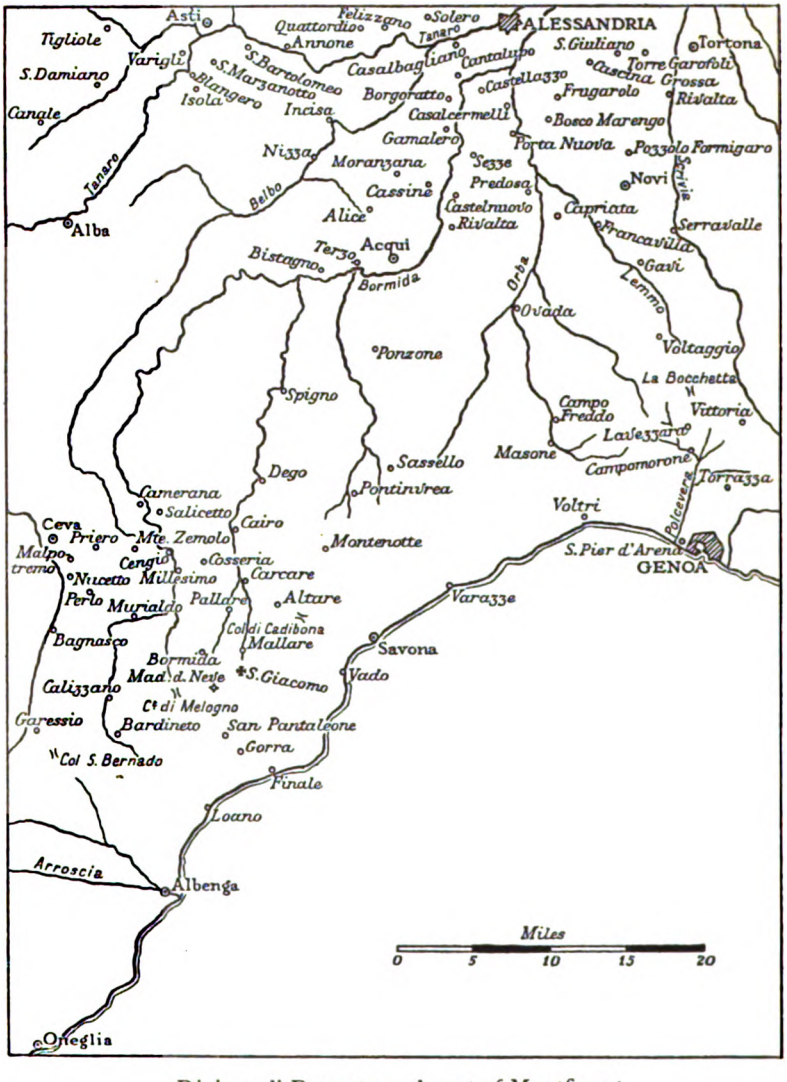
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The Spanish troops of the Infant's army had 18 battalions in the small plain at Albenga, and the remaining 20 in the smaller plain at Loano. The French troops, 32 battalions, were in the neighbourhood of Nice. These three contingents composed the Infant's army which was to make its way by the track along the edge of the mountains overlooking the sea as far as Finale, there to cross the Apennines into the valley of the Bormida, which it was to descend until it should be in a position to join hands with de Gages.

Apart from the difficulties of supply, the march of 75 miles from Nice to Finale was exposed to two dangers. The path was in most places open to bombardment by the British fleet, which might also interrupt the march by landing parties. Admiral Rowley, at this time in command of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, was intent chiefly upon intercepting French and Spanish trade, and Spanish treasure-ships. His attention to the Riviera was spasmodic and ineffectual, so that in February 3,000 Spanish troops and quantities of provision and ammunition had been transported by sea from Barcelona to Nice; nor did Rowley succeed in preventing the transport of de Gages's artillery from Orbetello to Spezia. Even in June a convoy from Barcelona safely reached Genoa. In this year the Genoese were embarrassed by a revolt in Corsica, and the British Admiralty in assisting the revolt, made the mistake of sending its ships to watch Corsica rather than Genoa. Thus the march of the Allies was not seriously troubled by the British fleet. It might have been helped by the Spanish fleet, but that lay idle at Cartagena.

The other danger was from Charles Emmanuel's army. The coast route forms a curve of which the centre is in the southern part of the plain of Turin between Cuneo and Mondovi, and the radius about 40 miles. From here Charles Emmanuel might strike the army during its march, when it would necessarily be spread out along 20 or 30 miles of road. For this purpose he might move down any of the river valleys, especially from

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Riviera di Ponente and part of Montferrat.

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Ceva by the valley of the Upper Tanaro, from which routes led from Ormea by Pieve to Oneglia, from Garessio to Albenga, and from Calizzano to Finale. If he waited until the Allies were well on their way he might, by the Col di Tenda, invade the county of Nice behind them and cut off their supplies.

These various possible moves had been foreseen and provided for by Maillebois, who reached Antibes on the 20th of May, having already worked out his plan for the first movements of the army. It is contained in a memorandum of which the substance is as follows:

'To fulfil the views of the courts of France and Spain, and to follow the system adopted by the two crowns for the coming campaign in Italy, we must act at the same time along the whole frontier of Piedmont from Tortona to Ceva.

The siege of Tortona must be the task of de Gages, that of Ceva of a detachment of the Infant's army, which will aim at favouring both these operations, either by holding the King of Sardinia in check before it or by driving him back across the Tanaro, fighting him either alone or in conjunction with Lobkowitz if he joins that general.

The following plan merely gives the idea of the first position to be taken by all the troops before the operations begin:

1. The county of Nice and the communications with Dolceacqua and Ventimiglia will be guarded by forces told off for the purpose.

2. Two brigades (eight battalions) will operate from Triora to Rezzo and La Pieve to alarm the enemy between Nava and Ormea, as well as at Saorgio, and also to cover the coast road.

3. Forty or fifty battalions will assemble at Oneglia:

(*a*) to support the threat against Nava;

(*b*) to be ready to move by Finale to the sources of the Bormida;

(*c*) to march by the right branch of the Bormida to Acqui. The reserve at Savona to occupy Carcare and Cairo or to move to Acqui if the king of Sardinia offers to join Lobkowitz. For if you take Acqui you oblige him to march behind the Tanaro.

4. Meanwhile de Gages to besiege Serravalle and then to besiege Tortona.

5. The Infant and de Gages to act according to the movements of Charles Emmanuel and Lobkowitz, but always to be in a position to help one another.

The Infant from Albenga will contain the King on the Upper Tanaro and will advance if the King moves by his left towards Lobkowitz. De Gages to debouch and to go to Novi as soon as the Infant is in a position to support him.'

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On reaching Antibes, Maillebois had to deal with difficulties of supply; corn could not be obtained in Provence; it came from Languedoc and Burgundy by the Rhone to Arles and thence by road to Nice. Here there had been accumulated 1,400,000 lb. of flour. The Spaniards had made their own depots along the coast, and Maillebois could count on taking over from them 150,000 lb. at Albenga. The problem was with the flour at Nice to provide the troops with bread or biscuits on the march from Nice to Albenga. Nothing could be safely moved by sea because of the British fleet. The contractors were behind time and had provided only 700 mules. Maillebois appointed a new contractor and hired at Grasse 300 more mules at the cost of the defaulting contractor.[1] On May 24 Maillebois went on to Nice, where he arranged for the march and protection of the army as he had planned it. On the 29th were issued the orders to du Barail (Brigadier-General), to whom were given 2 battalions and a number of detachments to be posted for the protection of the county of Nice at Châteauneuf, Levens, Bevera, and La Turbie. On the 30th followed instructions for the Marquis de Mirepoix (Lieut.-General)[2] commanding the 7 battalions destined to operate against Ponte de Nava. In order to protect the army on its march towards Albenga, Mirepoix was to march by Pigna to Triora, where he was to meet a Spanish detachment under Chevert from Oneglia. He was then to occupy Rezzo and Pieve di Teco. On the 30th were written also instructions to De Brun (Lieut.-General), who was to command the first division of the main body. Of this instruction the interesting passage is:

'As the route along the sea-coast is in many places exposed to the guns of the English ships, which might disturb the march of the troops, especially of the baggage, it is left to the judgement of M. de Brun to arrange his march either by day or by

[1] Maillebois's arrangements for supply throw so much light on the difficulty of operations in the eighteenth century that it seems worth while to reproduce the greater part of the memorandum in which he worked them out. It is given in Appendix B.

[2] See Appendix C.

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night: he is informed that from Bordighera to Oneglia there is a way along the mountain sheltered from the guns of the enemy's ships; the note of this route will be sent to him at Bordighera; he is at liberty to take this route according to the information which he may have of the position of the English squadron.'

After completing these arrangements Maillebois moved his head-quarters to Albenga, where he arrived on the 3rd of June. The three divisions of the main body started on the 2nd, 4th, and 6th of June, their movement being protected by the divisions of Mirepoix in the hills on their left, and the last of them reached Albenga on the 16th of June.

Charles Emmanuel too had made his preparations for the coming campaign. Though he had to be ready to resist attack at any point of his frontier from the Little St. Bernard to the Col di Tenda, and from the Col di Tenda eastward to Tortona, he was well aware of the intention of the allied courts to move by the Riviera. He knew of the negotiations with Genoa, of the accumulation of supplies between there and Nice, and of the march of de Gages into Genoese territory. He had filled up the ranks of his fifty-six battalions and called out the local militia in the threatened regions. Three battalions were in the island of Sardinia, where, of course, they had to remain. Seven formed the garrisons of Ivrea, Susa, Fenestrelle, and Cuneo. Two had been at Modena with the Austrians and two at Piacenza. Twelve were billeted in the region of Tortona and Alessandria, one of these being posted at Acqui. Seventeen were quartered along the Tanaro from Ormea to Malpotremo near Ceva, and thirteen were kept in reserve in the triangular area of which the corners are at Susa, Cuneo, and Asti. The Austrian troops of Schulenburg, the temporary successor of Lobkowitz, about 20,000 men, had moved to Pizzighettone after the withdrawal of de Gages from before Modena.

The principal Piedmontese force of 17 battalions, together with 6,000 militia, all under General Cinzano, was placed on the Upper Tanaro to guard against attack which might come from Oneglia towards Ormea, from Albenga

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towards Garessio, or from Finale or Savona or both, by Carcare and Millesimo towards Ceva, or by Cairo and Dego towards Acqui. Cinzano had posts of militia at Bardinetto, Millesimo, Cosseria, Cairo, Altare, Mallare, Montenotte, and Pont Invrea. For the moment Ceva was the danger spot, being within a march from the great plain of Cuneo and Turin. It was also the point from which the Piedmontese army could most effectively strike out against the coast route, Ceva being only twenty miles from Finale. For this reason in the negotiations for the plan of campaign, the French Court had insisted on the capture of the fortress of Ceva as a preliminary to any advance of the allied armies into the territories either of Parma or of Milan.

The French strategists expected to be attacked on the way to Finale, and afterwards thought that Charles Emmanuel, by making no such attack, had lost his best opportunity. But Charles Emmanuel could find no means of feeding his army in the mountains during such an operation, and the roads were so poor that he could hardly have collected at any spot a force sufficient for an effective blow.

Yet the precautions taken by Maillebois proved very necessary. The strong French parties sent to Triora and Rezzo found bodies of Piedmontese militia in the neighbourhood of Borgomaro. These bodies they attempted to capture with the aid of detachments from Oneglia and Albenga. But the militia, hardy peasants, familiar with the ground, evaded their pursuers and made their way along the paths, which here skirt the summits, to Briga, and from Briga a daring partisan leader led a couple of thousand of the armed peasantry there collected and made a descent on Ventimiglia, where on June 17th he plundered and burnt the stores which Maillebois, with so much trouble, had there accumulated. By this time, however, the French troops had reached Oneglia, where there was a depot, and where they could receive supplies from Genoa.

On the 8th of June de Gages, now at Campomorone with his Spanish force, which amounted only to 13,000

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men instead of 25,000 as had been assumed when the plan of campaign was made, asked the Infant for reinforcements. The Infant ordered 12 squadrons to join him, and on the 17th sent him 5 battalions, to make up for which he ordered 3 battalions from Barcelonnette and 4 from Savoy to join his own army. The last of these did not reach Nice until August 19, and they were then employed covering the communications at points between Saorgio and Cairo. Early in June Schulenburg from Pizzighettone had crossed the Po and marched to Voghera, whence on June 17 he moved forward to Novi in order that his 20,000 men might consume the supplies of that district.

Maillebois, after the Infant's army was assembled at Albenga and Finale, was anxious that both armies should advance, but difficulties were made by the Genoese, who wished, according to the treaty, to preserve the pretence of neutrality until the allied army had reached the plain of Alessandria. Maillebois determined to start without them, and it was agreed that the advance should begin on June 22.

On that day de Gages reinforced his advance-guard on the Bocchetta, and on the 24th sent forward a brigade over the Pass dei Giovi to Busalla in the valley of the Scrivia, while his main body moved up to the Bocchetta. On the 26th the Genoese at length reinforced him with 8,000 men. Schulenburg had occupied Voltaggio with his advance-guard. On the 1st of July de Gages took the place by the combination of a frontal attack with attacks on both flanks, and on the 4th pushed on to Gavi and Novi, which the Austrians abandoned as he advanced.

Meanwhile, Maillebois arranged the march of the army from the coast in six columns starting from Loano, Finale, Vado, and Savona to Melogno, the Madonna della Neve, S. Giacomo, and Carcare, points on the ridge of the Apennines, all of which were reached on the 30th of June, when a two days' halt was made. Mirepoix's column from Pieve marched along the Albenga-Garessio road to the Col of S. Bernardo, which it also reached on June 30.

Cinzano now moved his main body to Molere near Ceva,

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Montferrat: To illustrate the Surprise of Asti.

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of which he reinforced the garrison and spread his outposts from the Tanaro above Bagnasco through Perlo and Nucetto to Priero, with advance posts at Murialdo and Monte Zemolo.

On July 5 the army of the Infant began to descend the valley of the Bormida, preceded by an advance-guard. On July 6 it was at Dego, on the 8th at Spigno, on the 10th at Bistagno, on the 14th at Acqui, which had surrendered on the 9th to the advance-guard. The advance-guard was on the 14th at Cassine, while a flank-guard had been sent to Nizza della Paglia. This march was covered on its flank by Mirepoix's detachment, which had moved from S. Bernardo to Bardinetto and then to Millesimo, whereupon Cinzano had extended his outposts as far as Camerana.

The French Court had agreed to the adoption of the Riviera route on condition that the operations should begin by the sieges of Tortona, Ceva, Mondovi, and Saorgio. But it had also been agreed that the first investment should be that of Tortona, on the ground that the guns for all four sieges would have to be provided by Genoa.

Immediately after the capture of Acqui, Maillebois wrote to de Gages proposing that the Infant should at once undertake the siege of Ceva, covered against the Austrians by de Gages with his army at or within reach of Novi. Castelar, the Infant's mentor, agreed with this proposal; but de Gages would not hear of it, though he did not expect to be ready to invest Tortona for some weeks, during which Maillebois's army, covering the investment, would exhaust the supplies of the region between Acqui Novi and the Bormida. De Gages had instructions from Madrid to insist on first taking Tortona, and Maillebois divined that, as soon as Tortona should have been taken, orders from Madrid would drive the Spanish army towards Parma without regard to the protection of the line of communications, for which the possession of Ceva was of the utmost importance, as its occupation by a French garrison would cover the whole route from Ventimiglia to

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Albenga. Maillebois reluctantly acquiesced in the postponement of the siege of Ceva to that of Tortona.

This was the first manifestation of a difference of view between the French strategists and the Spanish Court, a difference which was to prove ruinous to the designs of both governments.

Charles Emmanuel went to Alessandria on July 6, as by that time the direction of the Allies' attack was clear. On the 8th he went to Tortona, where he met Schulenburg and made his plans. The enemy might attack Tortona with a view to marching to Parma and Milan, or they might attack Alessandria with a view to the invasion of Piedmont. He might protect Tortona by putting his army on the right bank of the Scrivia, but this would sacrifice Piedmont. He might leave the Austrians on the Scrivia to cover Tortona and post his own army so as to cover Alessandria, but to divide an army is a fatal mistake which he was too good a general to make. He determined to encamp both armies on the right bank of the Tanaro about Piovera, between Montecastello and Bassignana. In this position he protected Alessandria and indirectly protected Tortona by the threat of an attack upon any force which might invest it. He garrisoned Tortona with 5 Piedmontese battalions, and on July 16 moved the united armies to the chosen camp. As it was evident that the centre of gravity was to be in this region, and not in that of Ceva, he ordered Cinzano to send him 10 battalions, and a few days later to send another 7. These detachments were sent by Cinzano and marched from Ceva to Alba, where they crossed the Tanaro, and thence through Asti to Felizzano and Solero, at which places they were halted on reaching them towards the close of July.

On the 28th of July Charles Emmanuel moved the army into a much stronger position on the left bank of the Tanaro between Montecastello and Bassignana, and here on the 1st of August he brought up the parties from Solero and Felizzano.

On July 16 de Gages moved from Novi to Capriata and Francavilla in order to be nearer the Infant, whose

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army on the 19th crossed the Bormida to Castelnuovo Bormida, moving next day to Sezze while de Gages went to Bosco Marengo. On the 23rd the two armies united between Castelazzo and Frugarolo.

Maillebois was distressed by his neglect of Ceva, and the consequent difficulty of protecting his communications from Nice and the long route by which mules could pass only one at a time. He relied upon the detachments which had been left for the purpose of covering the coast route, 7 battalions at Millesimo, 4 at Bardinetto, and 4 divided between Rezzo, Mendatica, and Triora.

Cinzano, after sending 17 battalions to Charles Emmanuel, had only 8 left with which to cover Ceva. On July 24 Mirepoix commanding the French at Millesimo, attacked Cinzano's posts at Monte Zemolo and drove them back to Molere. Cinzano then reinforced himself by 4 battalions from the reserve, which, however, soon afterwards returned to their original posts. On the same day Piedmontese parties from Cuneo and Saorgio made a raid on Dolceacqua, but were eventually forced to retire.

On the 25th of August Cinzano, after bringing up the 5 reserve battalions, making his total strength 13, deployed on a wide front right and left of Monte Zemola with a view to turning the flanks of Mirepoix's force.

Next morning 8 Piedmontese companies crossed the Bormida at Cengio and drove in a couple of companies forming the outpost on Mirepoix's right. Mirepoix reinforced his right, and drove the Piedmontese companies back across the river. He then waited all day, but no further attack developed, and at night retired to Carcare, where he occupied a strong position with his retreat assured in case of need through Altare, and in this position he remained, while Cinzano encamped at Monte Zemolo with outposts at Millesimo, Cosseria, and Saliceto.

On July 24 de Gages invested the fort of Serravalle, which surrendered on August 3. Next day the Infant's army encamped between S. Giuliano and Cascina Grossa, while de Gages's encamped north of Tortona, facing the town with his right on the Scrivia and his left on the Grue,

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so that the Infant's army faced that of Charles Emmanuel, while de Gages's attacked Tortona. The first trench was dug on the 8th of August, the first battery opened fire on the 14th, when the town surrendered and the Spaniards began the siege of the citadel. Towards the end of August de Gages was joined by the troops which he had sent in the spring to Orbetello and by further Genoese troops, making a total reinforcement of 5,000 men.

On the 3rd of September the citadel of Tortona surrendered, the garrison being allowed to march out on condition of not serving against the Allies for a year. The same day Charles Emmanuel sent off a couple of battalions and 2,000 horse to meet Cinzano, who was to march with 6 battalions from Monte Zemolo to attack Acqui, leaving 7 battalions at Monte Zemolo under Leutrum. The two parties met at Nizza, whence they advanced to Acqui; but Maillebois had wind of this plan and sent off 7 battalions to reinforce the garrison and a battalion and 600 horse under Chevert across the Bormida to Gamalero to cut off the retreat of the party sent by Charles Emmanuel. Both Piedmontese parties retreated.

Even before the bombardment of the citadel of Tortona had begun, the disagreement between the two courts of France and Spain had made itself felt. Elizabeth Farnese, indifferent to military considerations, was eager for her son to enter into his kingdom. The brothers d'Argenson and all the French generals knew very well that Don Philip could not safely be settled in Parma or in Milan unless and until the Austrian and Piedmontese armies had been defeated, and that to that end the Spanish and French armies must be kept together, and their communications with France securely held.

So long as the Austrian army was weak, as it must be while Maria Theresa was fighting Frederick of Prussia, the best move for the Allies was to beat Charles Emmanuel, to compel him to make peace, and then, with all the routes to France open and secure, to attack and defeat the Austrians.

But the Spaniards proposed that as soon as Tortona fell

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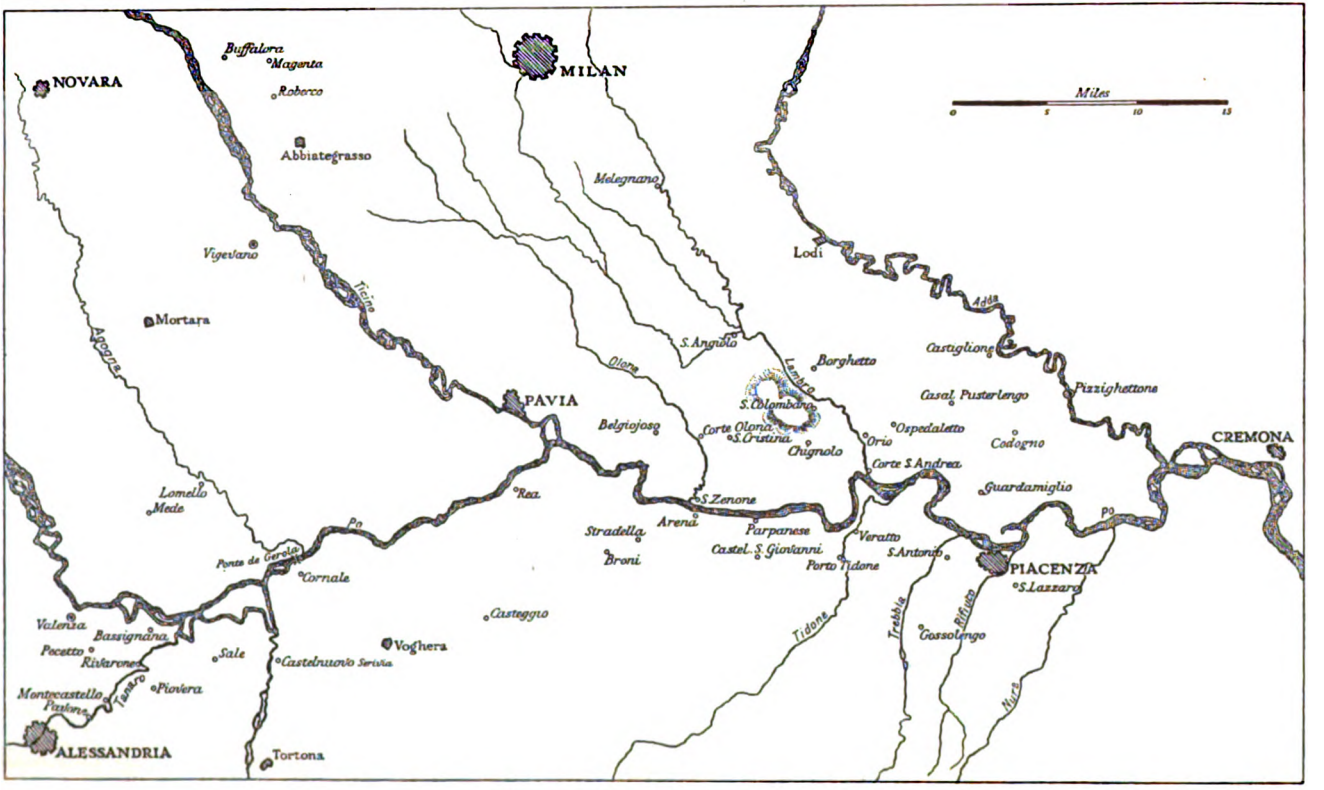
they should march their army off to Piacenza and Parma. Maillebois urged that he ought first to take Ceva in order to secure his communications. De Gages objected that they would not be safe unless Cherasco, Asti, and Alessandria were taken; he would prefer to cross the Po and take Pavia and Pizzighettone. But Maillebois would not agree to this unless enough troops were kept to guard the line of communications. He also thought that Exilles ought if possible to be taken, in order to have a shorter line of communications.

Immediately on the fall of Tortona, Elizabeth Farnese ordered the Infant to send de Gages with his army to Piacenza and Parma, and to follow with his own army so soon as Alessandria should have been taken.

Maillebois protested. The Austro-Sardinian army was united behind the Tanaro, and no blow had been struck against it. It would be rash in its presence to divide the allied army. The communications with France were vital, especially as the army must shortly take winter quarters and could not find supplies in the region of Tortona and Alessandria, where everything had been eaten up by both sets of armies. The only region where the allied troops could subsist during the winter was on the left bank of the Tanaro, but before it could be settled there the enemy's army must be driven away and Alessandria invested.

He proposed a plan which, while it met as far as possible the wishes of Elizabeth Farnese and the conditions of the treaty with Genoa for the protection of Genoese territory, was based upon the divergence between Austrian and Piedmontese interests. Charles Emmanuel was fighting to protect Piedmont; the Austrians, to protect the Austrian dominions, especially the Duchy of Milan. Let the Allies threaten to invade the Milanese, and Schulenburg must move to resist the invasion. But if the whole army crossed the Po for the invasion Charles Emmanuel would be left free to move on to its communications, either with Genoa or with France. The threat must be made with a part of the army, but so as to convince the Austrians that it would be carried out by the whole. Once the Austrians had left

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Alessandria to Piacenza.

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Charles Emmanuel alone, the detachment charged with the threat must turn back and the whole allied army must attack him.

In order further to distract Charles Emmanuel during the main operation, Mirepoix, who had returned to Millesimo, was to be active on the Tanaro, and Lautrec from Briançon to attack Exilles with the French troops in Dauphiné, reinforced by Spanish troops from Savoy.

This plan was accepted by the Infant and de Gages, and its principal part was carried out with brilliant success.

On the 6th of September the Duc de la Vieuville set out from Tortona with 5,000 men for Piacenza, which he reached on the 8th and which surrendered on the 12th, and then sent detachments which occupied Parma and Bobbio.

As soon as de Vieuville had started, de Gages moved his army to Castelnuovo Scrivia, whereupon Schulenburg sent 8 battalions under Pertusati from Bassignana across the Po; but as de Gages made no further move Schulenburg halted them at S. Nazzaro. Maillebois thereupon decided that stronger measures were needed to draw away Schulenburg; so on September 17 de Gages moved towards Voghera, while Maillebois moved the Infant's army from S. Giuliano across the Scrivia and encamped between Castelnuovo and the Po, withdrawing all his posts from the Bormida but retaining them on the Tanaro at Sale and Piovera. De Gages collected boats on the Po for a bridge opposite Stradella. Schulenburg now grew uneasy, collected all his troops on his left near Bassignana, and sent across the Po two regiments which marched to Pavia, while Pertusati, who had already gone on to Pavia, marched to Milan.

On the 21st, de Gages having completed a bridge near Stradella, Vieuville from Piacenza, where he had been relieved by two Spanish regiments, crossed the Po by the bridge and marched to Pavia, which his advance-guard entered by surprise in the night, so that the place surrendered next day, the 23rd. Pertusati, finding himself thus cut off from the main Austrian army, marched from

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Milan to Pizzighettone in order to protect Cremona and Mantua. De Gages sent 7 battalions towards Pavia to reinforce Vieuville, gave out that he was about to march on Milan with all his army, and set out in the direction of Stradella. Schulenburg was now convinced that it was his duty to protect Milan, and Charles Emmanuel had reluctantly to agree to the separation of the two armies, each to protect its own territory.

Schulenburg, with his Austrians, except 3 battalions left at Bassignana, marched off towards Pavia. But the moment the Austrian advance-guard crossed the Ticino de Gages turned to the right-about, recalled all his detachments, and marched back across the Scrivia, as did also the Infant's army. During the night of September 26 both armies marched to the Tanaro, which they reached at dawn on the 27th.

The ground had been carefully reconnoitred two days before by Bourcet, who had cleverly manœuvred his escort so as to draw after it parties of the enemy's cavalry, which crossed the river to drive it away and so revealed to Bourcet the position of the fords.

The Piedmontese position had its right at Pavone and its left at Bassignana. The departure of the Austrians obliged Charles Emmanuel to spread out his troops along the six-mile front, which he may have thought sufficiently protected by the Tanaro. In any case, the attack delivered at dawn was a surprise. The Franco-Spanish army had been formed for the attack in 7 divisions, 4 Spanish divisions forming the 2 right-hand columns of 2 divisions each, and 3 French divisions forming the 3 left-hand columns. The second and third columns forded the Tanaro above and below Rivarone, cut down the Piedmontese piquets, and surrounded the village, from which 6 Piedmontese battalions escaped to Pecetto. The fourth column made a show of attacking Montecastello, and so prevented the Piedmontese troops there from reinforcing the centre, while the fifth column absorbed the attention of the Piedmontese on the extreme right. Meanwhile the right-hand column under de Gages himself, with one

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division, attacked and drove out the 3 Austrian battalions from Bassignana, while the other division marched straight to the bridge across the Po and destroyed it just as the Austrian advance-guard, hurrying back, came in sight. The Piedmontese cavalry was attacked by the allied cavalry between Rivarone and Bassignana, was disordered in crossing a series of ravines, at the last of which it was charged and badly beaten.

The Piedmontese centre pierced and the left wing broken, Charles Emmanuel managed to collect his troops near Valenza and retreated the same night to Giarole, while Schulenburg, too late to take part in the battle, marched up the left bank of the Po to join him. The Franco-Spanish army encamped between Bassignana and Rivarone. In the battle the French and Spaniards together lost 200 men, the Piedmontese 2,000. Next day Charles Emmanuel marched to Casale, threw bridges across the Po to connect him with Schulenburg, who continued to march along the north bank, and sent 1,000 horse to Breme.

The manœuvres by which the battle of Bassignana was prepared and the plan of attack for the battle are brilliant examples of eighteenth-century generalship. The army is separated into a number of divisions which are dispersed for the purpose of misleading the enemy but of which the greater number act together in the battle. In the attack also the army is subdivided, each portion receiving its distinct mission. The scheme is rightly based upon surprise and upon exact reconnaissance of the ground. Even the careful Charles Emmanuel did not know, what Bourcet had so cleverly found out, that the Tanaro was fordable by infantry. The victory, though decisive, was not as complete as Bourcet had intended. Of the 2 centre columns which crossed the river just above Rivarone, the right-hand one took that village, while the left-hand one ascended the hill in front. But here it halted instead of pushing on. Bourcet intended it to follow the crest of the hill behind Montecastello and so to cut off a considerable body of Piedmontese troops which were posted at Charles Emmanuel's head-quarters at Montecastello. General

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Montal, who commanded this column, halted too soon, and Charles Emmanuel was able with the troops at Montecastello to gain the ridge and to follow it two or three miles to the west and so make good his retreat to Valenza. It was also Bourcet's intention that the 2 left-hand columns, whose mission was to hold fast the Piedmontese right, should if need be cross the river and deliver an attack in order to prevent the troops before them from retreating, but the officers here commanding were content to show their troops without crossing the river.

Maillebois decided to besiege Alessandria, so on the 30th the united army moved to Pecetto with 2 brigades at S. Salvatore and smaller parties at Quargnento and Solero. On the 2nd of October the army moved to S. Salvatore, leaving the cavalry at Bassignana for forage, and placing 1,200 horse at Villa Bella to keep touch with the Piedmontese. By these positions Alessandria was invested and 22 battalions and 2 regiments of dragoons undertook the siege of the place. The batteries opened fire on the 8th, and on the 12th the town surrendered and the garrison retired to the citadel, which was at once blockaded.

A second branch of Maillebois's plan was an attack on Exilles, which, whether successful or not, would draw off Piedmontese troops from the main army.

Orders for this attack had been sent to Lautrec in the middle of August, and received by him on the 28th. He was to employ the French troops left in Dauphiné and 6 Spanish battalions from Savoy, but the orders to the Spanish troops were delayed and Lautrec was kept waiting for them at Cesanna for a week, so that the Piedmontese had time to make preparations for defence and to collect reinforcements.

The fort of Exilles stands on a rock on the north bank of the Dora and is accessible only from the village higher up the river. It had a garrison of about 500 men. The Piedmontese had a regular battalion and a number of Vaudois at Giaglione, and there was a further assembly of Vaudois on the slopes of the Assietta, the great ridge which runs from the Colle delle Finestre to Cesana. While

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waiting for the Spaniards Lautrec sent troops to Thullie, Capella Bianca, Quattro Denti, and Chiomonte. He broke the bridge over the Dora between Chiomonte and Exilles and cut the aqueduct which supplied the fort. The Spanish troops came over the Col della Rho to Bardonnecchia, whereupon Lautrec occupied S. Colombano, Deveys, and the village of Exilles, while the main body of the Spaniards encamped at Salbertrand to cover the march of the artillery, which had to come from Jausiers over the Mont Genèvre.

The Piedmontese in the fort bombarded the village, and 1,500 Vaudois assembled on the ridge of the Assietta in order to make an attack on the artillery during its march. The battalions from Susa, Fenestrelle, Cuneo, and Aosta moved into the Dora valley and on to the Assietta ridge. Their advance-guards attacked Lautrec's post at the Col of Cotte Plane.

The attack was repulsed, but the Piedmontese kept their position on the ridge. A road had to be cut in the rock to take the artillery to a position from which it could be used against Exilles, and Lautrec, seeing that to complete this road would be the work of many days, and that to cover it he had to spread his troops among so many posts that he had no main body left for the siege, gave up the project and sent the guns back over the Mont Genèvre. During their withdrawal his posts were attacked at Tuglia, Capella Bianca, and Quattro Denti, as well as at Cotte Plane. Lautrec withdrew his posts and collected his troops, first at Jouvenceau and then at S. Sicario, where he could cover the march of the artillery till the snow should fall.

The Piedmontese now collected their troops at Traverses and Pattemouche in the upper valley of the Chisone, and sent forward 2,000 men to the Col de Sestrières. Lautrec then sent 5 battalions to Champlas, whereupon the Piedmontese fell back to a position at Jaussand with their retreat over the Col del Piz into the valley of the Germanasca. Lautrec attacked them in front and on both flanks, captured their general, and drove the bulk of the

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force over the Col del Piz. He then retired to Briançon, sent the Spanish troops back to Savoy, and the French troops to their winter quarters in Dauphiné. Though the attack on Exilles had failed, it had drawn away the Piedmontese reserves from the main army, and to that extent had fulfilled the purpose of Maillebois.

The third branch of Maillebois's plan was the siege of Ceva, and on October 16 Mirepoix set out from Carcare with a siege train brought up from Savona, whereupon Leutrum, with the 7 battalions that Cinzano had left him, fell back across the Tanaro and posted himself behind that river just above Ceva. But Maillebois, after his victory at Bassignana, and with the prospect of obtaining the fortresses of Montferrat, thought Ceva no longer of supreme importance either for communications or for supplies, and abandoned for the time the project of taking it. Accordingly Mirepoix retired quietly from Monte Zemolo through Millesimo to Carcare and sent the siege train back to Savona. In the beginning of November he returned to Millesimo, had a brush with Leutrum beyond the Bormida, destroyed the bridge at Millesimo, and then returned to his position at Carcare, while Leutrum posted his troops at Priero with outposts towards the Bormida.

On the 14th of October Maillebois invested Valenza on the south bank only, and after a fortnight of trench-making and other preparations began the bombardment on the 24th of October. Four days later the garrison marched out across the Po and Maillebois's troops occupied the place.

After the fall of Valenza Maillebois sent Chevert with 8 battalions, 6 guns, and a party of cavalry to besiege Asti, and in order to cover the siege moved the army to Occimiano, the detachment from Villa Bella to Frassineto, and a smaller detachment to Terrugia. Up to this time the Piedmontese had been at Casale with detachments at Frassineto, Candia, and Terranova. They now withdrew from Casale to Morano leaving 600 men to hold the castle of Casale. A few days later Maillebois billeted his troops at Valenza, Casale, and Moncalvo, and a party

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of French troops seized the castle of Gabiano, while the Piedmontese army was between Morano and Crescentino with a bridge-head on the south side of the Po at Verrua.

Asti surrendered to Chevert on the 17th of November and was occupied by 8 battalions under de Montal.

Charles Emmanuel distributed his troops for the winter between Crescentino, Chivasso, and Chieri, with his cavalry at Villanova d'Asti.

After Mirepoix had fallen back to Carcare, Leutrum moved his 7 battalions towards Asti, of which Maillebois reinforced the garrison with 4 battalions and a regiment of cavalry.

The castle of Casale surrendered on November 29 after a few days' bombardment.

After the battle of Bassignana the Spanish court sent orders for the Spanish army to occupy the Duchies of Piacenza, Parma, and Milan, and to take the town and citadel of Milan.

Maillebois protested and handed to the Infant a paper in which he explained his view. He did not doubt the desirability of occupying the Milanese and taking the castle, but what he thought must be considered were the means of carrying out the enterprise and at the same time of securing the army and its communications during the winter, and of making good the losses suffered during the campaign. The combined army, including the Neapolitans and Genoese, had 99 battalions and 85 squadrons, but they were so weakened that several battalions had to be amalgamated in order to make up a single one fit for service. In order to bring them up to campaigning strength not less than 30,000 recruits would be required. It was necessary to cover the winter quarters, to keep a strong force in the neighbourhood of Alessandria, of which the citadel had yet to be taken, and in the covering line formed by Valenza, Casale, Asti, and Acqui, otherwise the communications with Genoa, whence came both supplies and ammunition, would not be secured. The Riviera route had also to be guarded. Pavia must be garrisoned

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by at least 5,000 men. Tortona, Voghera, Piacenza, and Parma would require at least 8,000 more; while it would be necessary in order to meet forces which would be likely to come from Austria, and to keep up communications with Naples, that a force of 12,000 to 15,000 men, equal to the whole army of de Gages, should be kept in the neighbourhood of Modena and the lower Po. This calculation showed that a force sufficient to hold Milan and take the citadel could not be spared without weakening unduly the whole system of defence. Moreover, it was impracticable in the winter, with the ground so wet that guns could not be moved, to besiege the citadel of Milan. There were not enough troops to guard the line of the Ticino and that of the Adda during the siege, and therefore the besieging force would be liable to be cut off. The citadel of Alessandria had still to be taken. Experience showed that in Italy the first success had always been rapid and brilliant, but had usually been followed by serious reverses due to the melting away of the armies, which were sure to be ruined if they kept the field through the winter.

Maillebois's protests had no effect, and in the second half of November the Spanish army marched away leaving with the French only 16 Spanish battalions and 5 squadrons at Ponte Stura on the Po above Casale.

The first party with the Infant marched by Castelnuovo di Scrivia, and crossed the Po at Ponte di Gerola, north of Cornale. The rest went by Voghera to Piacenza. The Infant marched by Robecco and Magenta to Milan, where on December 16 he occupied the town unresisted and prepared to besiege the citadel. Other Spanish troops were posted in the Lomellina, occupying Mede, Mortara, Vigevano, where the Ticino was bridged, and Turbigo. There were also posts at Buffalora and Abbiate Grasso, Cameri opposite Turbigo, and Sesto Calende on the Lago Maggiore. Another Spanish party was sent to Lodi, where it cut the bridge over the Adda.

Maillebois, in order to facilitate the acquisition of supplies, sent 4 or 5 battalions to be quartered in Lomello, Breme,

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Zeme, and Cozzo. He was uneasy about Asti, as the Piedmontese forces were gathered in a semicircle near that place, and therefore, to support Montal, sent 2 more battalions to Asti, 1 to Quarto, 3 to Moncalvo, and 2 to Castagnole. He also posted 2 battalions at Incisa (on the Belbo), Nizza, and Acqui.

In the middle of December Maillebois sent the Count, his son, to Versailles to explain the situation fully to the Minister of War. The Count reached Versailles on December 27.

On the Piedmontese side Leutrum had his head-quarters at San Damiano, where there were 5 battalions from Priero, 2 from Susa and Pragelas, and a body of Vaudois. He also had troops at Canale, Tigliole, Dusino, and S. Michele. He had a brigade quartered on the right bank of the Tanaro, at the castle of Blangero, at Isola, Marzanotto, and S. Bartolomeo below Asti. The cavalry was at Villanova d'Asti and Sinsan in the hills near Coconato, whence he could communicate with Verrua.

The Austrian troops, now under the Prince of Lichtenstein, were quartered between Vercelli and Novara.

On the 20th of December Charles Emmanuel went to Turin.

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VII. 1746: RUIN OF MAILLEBOIS

i. *D'Argenson's Negotiation*

In 1745 Louis XV was lifted up on the high tide of success. His great victory of Fontenoy was followed by Frederick's victory at Hohenfriedberg. The landing of the Pretender paralysed the British Government so far as its action on the Continent was concerned. Frederick's further victories prevented Maria Theresa from giving material assistance to Charles Emmanuel. The alliance of Genoa had made possible the brilliant campaign of Maillebois, who after his crushing blow at Bassignana had overrun Montferrat, while the Spaniards had occupied the Duchies of Parma and Milan. With a little further effort for his support Maillebois's triumph would be complete. He had explained his need for reinforcements and it was clear that he must continue to be gravely embarrassed unless Louis should frankly explain to the Spanish Court the necessity for giving him a free hand and should insist upon the cessation of Elizabeth Farnese's interference in the military operations. Yet this was the moment chosen by the Marquis d'Argenson to attempt a complete reversion of the policy of France and to reveal his failure either to grasp the political and military situation or to understand the character of the king his master. The result was disaster.

D'Argenson had one fixed idea which he inherited from Chauvelin, the expulsion of the Austrians from Italy and the redistribution of their territories in such a manner that Italy would be divided between a number of nearly equal states which were to form a federation under the auspices of France. The peace of Italy would then rest upon a balance of power between the Italian States. D'Argenson suggested that there would thus be an end of foreign intervention in that country.

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This has occasionally been regarded as a humanitarian scheme forming a contribution at the same time towards the perpetuation of peace and the liberation of Italy from foreign dominion. In reality it was but an attempt to realize a part of the great design of Sully, by which the supremacy of France in Europe was to rest upon the establishment along the whole of her eastern frontier of a series of small states under her protection. A project for perpetual peace resting upon the assumed primacy of the State which proposes it is necessarily inconsistent with itself, for it is the outcome of a wish, not for peace, but for power.

D'Argenson had from the beginning disliked the subordination of French policy to that of Spain; he detested the stubbornness of Elizabeth Farnese. He respected the character and ability of Charles Emmanuel; he appreciated the efficient administration of the Piedmontese dominions, and understood the resentment which Charles Emmanuel could not but cherish at his betrayal by France in the settlement which had followed the War of the Polish Succession.

Although France was now tied to Spain by the treaty of Fontainebleau and Charles Emmanuel to Austria by the treaty of Worms, d'Argenson persuaded Louis XV to authorize him to open negotiations with a view to inducing Charles Emmanuel to change sides. The negotiations were to be kept secret and to be revealed to the Spanish Court only when the treaty with Charles Emmanuel had been signed. Then, and not till then, Elizabeth Farnese was to be told that she was either to accept the treaty or to be deserted by France.

D'Argenson knew that his project must encounter serious difficulties. No one understood better than he that Charles Emmanuel's belief in the good faith of France had been destroyed ten years before, when Fleury had guaranteed the Milanese first to him and then to Elizabeth Farnese and had afterwards thrown them both over. He well understood that Charles Emmanuel's governing motive was security present and future. This had been

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the object of his alliance with Austria, but the help which he had received from Austria during 1745 had been so inadequate that he might now be prepared to reconsider his position. Elizabeth Farnese would be furious on learning of a negotiation conducted behind her back. Louis XV would never agree to leave her in the lurch.

During the spring and summer of 1745 d'Argenson had several times through private and secret channels made overtures to the Court of Turin, but had on each occasion been met with the assurance that Charles Emmanuel could listen to nothing inconsistent with his treaty obligations.

In the autumn d'Argenson went privately to see the Count of Mongardino, a nobleman residing at Paris as the agent of the Piedmontese Princess of Carignan, and through him were opened secret communications with Turin. Being assured that Charles Emmanuel was anxious for peace, if it could be obtained honourably on his part, d'Argenson entrusted the negotiations to his old friend Champeaux, now the French resident at Geneva, who happened to be on a visit to Paris. Champeaux dictated to Mongardino the draft of a treaty embodying d'Argenson's scheme.

The Austrians were to be expelled from Italy, the feudal rights of the Empire in that country to be abolished, Tuscany to be transferred from the Grand Duke Francis to his brother Charles, Parma and Piacenza to be given to Don Philip, and Charles Emmanuel to obtain a large part of the Milanese, but to cede Oneglia to the Genoese, who were to keep Finale.

Mongardino pointed out the improbability of these terms being accepted, but d'Argenson sent Champeaux in disguise with this draft treaty to Turin, without waiting (as diplomatic usage required) for the consent of the Piedmontese Court to receive him. Champeaux arrived at Turin on December 20, 1745, the day on which Charles Emmanuel returned from the army to his capital.

At this time the military situation of Piedmont was critical, for the French were in possession of Valenza, Casale, and Asti, and had invested the Citadel of Alessan-

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dria, the strongest but also the last fortress in Montferrat. If Alessandria should fall, the next campaign would open with the siege of Turin. Austrian help seemed less likely than ever, for on December 15, 1745, Leopold of Dessau, at Kesselsdorf, had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Saxon army. Accordingly, diplomatic etiquette was waived, and the Piedmontese ministers, Gorzegno and Bogino, went to see Champeaux at his lodgings. Champeaux declared that his instructions were to settle the matter in one way or another in four days. He was told that the King of Sardinia could not agree to the abolition of the feudal rights of the Empire, nor to the ejection of the Grand Duke Francis from Tuscany, and that the proposed territorial rearrangements were not satisfactory. Thereupon Champeaux read aloud a letter from Louis XV specifying territorial arrangements differing considerably from those of the draft treaty. In this letter the suggested distribution of territory was expressed in these words:

'To the King of Sardinia all the Milanese on the left bank of the Po, and on the right bank as far as the Scrivia.

'To the Infant all on the right bank from the Scrivia up to and including the State of Parma, the Cremonese (the Fort of Gera d'Adda being destroyed), and that part of the Mantovano which is between the Oglio and the Po; the part beyond to the Republic of Venice, and that which is on the right bank of the Po to the Duke of Modena, with the eventual succession to the Duchy of Guastalla.

'To the Genoese the Principality of Oneglia with Finale and the Castle of Serravalle.'

Champeaux was then given a memorandum in which were embodied the words of Louis's letter and which recorded Charles Emmanuel's willingness to accept the boundaries so defined, but Champeaux was to express the great regret with which the King of Sardinia would part with the Principality of Oneglia and his hope that Louis would take means to render the sacrifice of this territory unnecessary.

This memorandum, to which were subscribed Champeaux's full powers together with his declaration that the partition explained in it was entirely in accordance with

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his instructions, was signed in duplicate by both parties on December 26.

The Piedmontese ministers explained to Champeaux that the agreement now reached ought to be promptly followed by an armistice. Champeaux assured them that there would be no difficulty on that head. On December 27 he left for Paris, taking with him one copy of the memorandum and the papers in which the Sardinian objections to the original draft treaty were explained.

By the time Champeaux reached Versailles the military and political situation had undergone a complete transformation. Maria Theresa had made her peace with Frederick and was free to throw her whole strength against France and Spain. The Treaty of Dresden had been signed on Christmas Day 1745, and immediately afterwards she had sent off Browne with 30,000 men from Bohemia to Italy. There was every probability that in a few weeks the desperate situation in which Charles Emmanuel had found himself when he accepted the terms of the agreement of December 26, would be, to say the least, greatly relieved. Moreover, if d'Argenson had carefully examined the military position of the French and Spanish armies he must have discovered that it was not quite so favourable as he had supposed, for in the middle of December the Comte de Maillebois had reached Versailles, sent by his father the Marshal to explain the grave embarrassment caused him by the lack of reinforcements, the separation of the Spanish from the French army, and the dangerous dispersion of the troops.

On the 1st of January 1746 Charles Emmanuel sent instructions to Mongardino in which, after explaining that there might be some difficulty in arranging an armistice before the acceptance by Spain of the agreement of December 26, he said: 'You should represent to his Majesty that it will be necessary that in the meantime he should send to his generals orders to the effect that they should limit their requisitions in the regions which they are occupying and that we should be allowed to send provisions to the garrison of the citadel of Alessandria . . .'

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He had just heard of the treaty of Dresden. The instructions therefore went on to say: 'We foresee that M. de Maillebois and still more M. de Gages, in anticipation of the reinforcements which it is to be presumed the Empress will now send to Italy, and not being informed of our situation with his Majesty, will wish to make the most of the time by attempting to disturb our troops and to seize further parts of our territory. This would give them a great advantage over us, for they would apparently be acting in good faith and could undertake any enterprise they might think fit against our States; while on our side, to avoid any suspicion of bad faith, we ought to form no plans of attack, and could merely oppose attacks begun by them. It is obvious that that would be greatly to our disadvantage.' Mongardino obeyed these instructions and on January 19 d'Argenson sent off to Maillebois the following letter:

'A negotiation is far advanced with Turin, but it is more difficult to deal with Madrid. We are adopting a tone which may be effectual; it is the greatest secret in the world, everything here being done by the King and me. This by the King's wish. Meanwhile the King of Sardinia hopes that the French army will not take advantage of him. I have no order to give you on that point. As regards the Germans they are not to be given consideration, quite the opposite. It would be for my brother to send you his orders; but as yet he knows nothing, nor does your son. For them I hope soon to have my lips unsealed. . . . PS.—If in the circumstances you were to act against Lichtenstein the King of Sardinia might perhaps not interfere but he would suspect us of bad faith and of misusing the delicate and secret situation in which we are. So that to-day it is simply defensive and tranquillity until the treaty shall have been signed.'

D'Argenson after hearing the report of Champeaux and receiving the text of the agreement of December 26, together with the papers giving the reasons why his own original draft had been rejected by Charles Emmanuel, drafted a formal treaty in which, besides the scheme of partition accepted on December 26, he embodied those clauses of his own former draft which Charles Emmanuel had rejected. He then sent this draft to Turin, where it

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was not likely to be accepted, and to Madrid, where it was equally sure of rejection as it gave to Charles Emmanuel the Duchy of Milan, which in 1743 by the Treaty of Fontainebleau Louis XV had undertaken to obtain for Don Philip. The courier who took it to Madrid was also the bearer of a letter from Louis XV to Philip V, a letter which d'Argenson had induced his master to write. This letter made no mention of the agreement of December 26, falsely represented the draft treaty as arising out of the initiative of Charles Emmanuel, and dwelt upon the advantages of the proposed federation of Italian States (already rejected at Turin). It asked for Philip's adhesion within forty-eight hours to the terms of the treaty, and added that in case of Philip's refusal Louis XV might go his own way and abandon Spain.

When Vaureal in an audience on January 25 presented the letter, Philip read it aloud. So soon as Elizabeth grasped that the Infant was not to have Milan she exclaimed, 'What about the treaty of Fontainebleau?' Philip, aroused from the lethargy in which he had been sunk for so many years, expressed his indignation in the strongest terms and said, 'This cannot be.'

At a second audience next day the King and Queen for Vaureal's benefit dissected d'Argenson's ideas. 'How many years would it take to bring about this federation of Italian States and to strip the Empire of its traditional rights? Could any one suppose that the King of Sardinia would overnight give up his policy of seesaw between the House of Austria and the House of Bourbon? It would certainly take many more years to carry out that scheme than to make the most of things as they stood. Besides, what an illusion to think that if this republic of sovereigns were to be formed the King of Sardinia would try to maintain a system of that sort! He would have only one object—to rob one after another all those whose existence would depend on his behaving with propriety, and so make himself master of them all. This shape given to Italy would be the most fatal of all for the Infant and the House of Bourbon. It would be better to keep the House of

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Austria in the north of Italy, because the House of Austria would have an interest in preventing the too great aggrandizement of the King of Sardinia.'

Philip and Elizabeth easily divined the authorship of the scheme, and on January 30 Philip replied in a friendly letter to Louis in which he hinted that if the hand was Esau's the voice was Jacob's. He informed Louis that he was sending the Duke of Huescar as a special ambassador to conduct the negotiation at Versailles. Huescar presented himself at Versailles on the 18th of February, his instructions being to protest against the proposed treaty. There was a prolonged deadlock between the two Courts.

While Vaureal at the Pardo was hearing the criticisms of Philip and Elizabeth of d'Argenson's draft treaty, Champeaux was on his way to Turin with the same document containing the articles, already rejected by Charles Emmanuel, for the abolition of the rights of the Empire in Italy, the formation of an Italian federation, and the transfer of Tuscany from the Grand Duke Francis to his brother Charles. His instructions were that he was to present this draft, to which he must previously have affixed his own signature, to the Court of Turin and to ask for its acceptance without substantial alteration within twenty-four hours. Failing that, he was to declare the negotiations broken off and to leave Turin. The Court of Turin would no doubt ask for an armistice, to which he must not agree until the new draft treaty had been signed. But no armistice was to take effect before the arrival of the King of Spain's reply to the letter of Louis XV. He was to add that in case the King of Spain should not agree to the treaty Louis XV was determined immediately to recall Maillebois's army from Italy. He was to preserve the strictest secrecy.

Champeaux arrived at Turin on January 29 and immediately had an interview with Gorzegno. The disclosure of the tenor of his instructions greatly disturbed Charles Emmanuel, who felt that the attempt to force upon him conditions which he had already rejected savoured less of good faith than of an attempt to entrap him. He was particularly anxious about the citadel of Alessandria, which

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had been long invested and would hardly be able to hold out much longer. If the armistice were much delayed the fortress might fall and he would then be at the mercy of France.

Champeaux was told that the Court of Turin stood by the agreement of December 26 but could not agree to proposals which had already been rejected. He was given the text of a definite treaty embodying the points agreed to on December 26 and also that of an agreement for an armistice. Authority was sent to Mongardino to sign the armistice but not the treaty, but he was to inform the French Court that as soon as the armistice was signed Charles Emmanuel would either send an ambassador to Versailles to sign the treaty, or would receive the French Ambassador to sign it at Turin. Champeaux was further told that, as the season for operations was approaching, the Austrian general was pressing Charles Emmanuel for his plans. Unless the negotiations with France were shortly concluded Charles Emmanuel was bound to co-operate with the Austrians. Unless, therefore, the armistice were signed by February 20 Charles Emmanuel would consider that on that date he would have a free hand. Champeaux insisted that the delay was insufficient for the French Court to receive, consider, and return the text of the armistice. He was then told that the date might be put back to the last day of February but not later. It was pointed out to Champeaux that there was no adequate guarantee of the acceptance of the treaty and of the armistice by the Spanish Court, and he was asked to obtain a written promise from Louis XV that, in case the agreement of Spain should not be given within two months, the French troops should be withdrawn from Italy. This was in accordance with d'Argenson's plan. But it was refused. D'Argenson had failed to understand Louis. The King had been willing to threaten his uncle Philip, but he never meant to make good his words. When it came to the point he told d'Argenson: 'We must on no account abandon Spain.'

By this time Gorzegno and Charles Emmanuel could

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not but suspect that the French were playing them false, especially as Mongardino wrote on February 7 to say that it was the common talk of Versailles that negotiations were in progress.

Champeaux remained at Turin, and the two documents, the treaty and the agreement for a suspension of arms, were sent from Turin on February 5 and reached Versailles on February 12. Mongardino was then asked to confer with a French diplomatist, the Abbé de la Ville, and five days were spent in trying to persuade him to sign the treaty but not the armistice. He pleaded that he had no authority to do this, and at last on February 17 the armistice was signed for both governments, and Mongardino was told that the Comte de Maillebois would be sent to Turin to arrange its execution and would then remain at Turin as French Ambassador. The Abbé de la Ville added that as the text of the armistice would reach Turin before the Comte de Maillebois, there was no reason why his journey should be secret. As a fact secrecy had already become impossible, because on the arrival of Champeaux's dispatches Louis had disclosed the negotiations to his council of ministers. And what the ministers learned was very soon known also by the foreign diplomatists at Versailles.

Meantime Charles Emmanuel's suspicions had been aroused, especially by the way in which the French had failed to keep the secret. He divined an intention to discredit him with Austria, and then to try and force upon him new and more disadvantageous conditions. So he determined to have a second string to his bow. He sent for the Austrian general, Lichtenstein, who reached Turin on February 26, and instructed Bogino, the Minister of War, to work out a plan for an attack on Asti by the combined armies, to be followed by the relief of Alessandria. His hands were tied until the end of February, but after that they were free. There were, therefore, to be no movements until March 4, so that if the armistice were put into effect on February 28 there would be time to notify the Austrian general of the change of policy.

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The Comte de Maillebois set out for Turin with a large suite and much ostentation, and wrote both to the Court of Turin and to his father that he should arrive at Turin on March 1.

Maillebois's letter reached Turin on February 27 at the same time as Mongardino's dispatch enclosing the text of the armistice.

Gorzegno immediately wrote to the Comte de Maillebois a letter which was sent by special messenger to Briançon, saying:

'If you are in a position immediately on your arrival here to have the armistice published and carried out, you may come freely, but if the publication has still to be delayed, in that case you quite understand that your presence here would too greatly embarrass us with our allies, and I cannot do less than beg you to be good enough to stop your journey at Briançon.'

The Comte de Maillebois was requested to reply immediately by the same messenger. Gorzegno wrote in much the same terms next day, and receiving no answer, wrote again on March 2, repeating his question whether Maillebois was prepared, on reaching Turin, to inform his father, the Marshal, of the armistice, as the King of Sardinia could not possibly explain to his allies the non-fulfilment of his engagements to them except by its immediate publication.

Maillebois was asked to be at Rivoli not later than the morning of the 4th of March.

On March 3 Gorzegno received through Champeaux a letter from Maillebois, proposing in accordance with the instructions of the Marquis d'Argenson three modifications in the terms of the armistice; these were:

(1) a limitation of the quantity of supplies which Charles Emmanuel was to be allowed to send to the Citadel of Alessandria;

(2) the armistice to be of unlimited duration, instead of for two months only;

(3) a further new document to be signed, to the effect that the armistice was arranged in virtue of the act of December 26.

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Gorzegno replied that these modifications amounted to a reopening of the whole negotiation; that Charles Emmanuel stood by the engagements he had made, but could not agree to any alteration whatever in the terms. Maillebois was requested to meet Count Bogino, the Piedmontese Minister of War, next morning at Rivoli.

Early on March 4 Count Bogino met Maillebois at Rivoli, and explained to him that Charles Emmanuel had arranged an expedition for the relief of Alessandria, and that the troops were to start that day; that the expedition could be countermanded up to noon, after which it would be too late. Maillebois agreed to withdraw the second of his new clauses but not the other two. Thereupon Bogino broke off the conference and returned to Turin.

At 10 p.m. Maillebois at last sent word that he withdrew his proposed clauses and was ready to publish the armistice the next day. He was told that it was too late, that the troops had started and could not now be recalled, and was requested to return at once to Briançon.

ii. *Surprise of Asti.*

In 1745 Maillebois with great skill, and with the co-operation of de Gages, had brought the combined armies to a position whence they could strike at Piedmont from the east, had defeated Charles Emmanuel in the battle of Bassignana, and taken the fortresses of Montferrat. Only the citadel of Alessandria still held out. Its capture would enable him to begin the coming campaign with an advance upon Turin, and he might reasonably expect that this advance would induce Charles Emmanuel to make his separate peace with France. But when Maillebois was looking forward to the decisive blow which at the beginning of the next campaign would put Piedmont out of action and enable him to turn with his whole force against Austria, Elizabeth Farnese had sent the Spanish army to Milan, Parma, and Piacenza and thus rendered concentrated action in any direction impossible. This

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dispersion had just been effected when the approach of a new Austrian army created a situation which could only be met by the closest co-operation between the Spaniards and the French and by concentrated and swift action on their part. It would be necessary for them to strike one blow at a time and that with all their force. The obvious and necessary first step was the capture of the citadel of Alessandria, which was the more urgent as the Sardinians had been allowed to remain in possession of Ceva. Yet the Spaniards, not content with separating from the French, had dispersed their own forces. The army of de Gages was divided between Piacenza, Milan, and Pavia, with detachments watching the Adda and the Ticino. On the Adda was a detachment at Lodi, while on the Ticino the outposts followed that river from the Lago Maggiore to Vigevano and ran thence to Mortara, where they joined the French outposts in the Lomellina. Maillebois had his French troops quartered in Valenza, Casale, Moncalvo, and Asti, and was blockading the citadel of Alessandria with a mixed force of French and Spaniards. The French outposts covered the Lomellina from Mortara to Casale, followed the Po to Gabiano, and thence by Moncalvo and Asti to Nizza and Acqui. Mirepoix's detachment at Carcare covered the most exposed part of the communications along the Riviera. The Austrians under Lichtenstein were quartered between Novara and Vercelli. A post at Trino connected them with the Piedmontese, who were quartered at Crescentino, Verrua, Chivasso, and Chieri, with the cavalry at Villanuova d'Asti. The Piedmontese outposts ran from Verrua by Cocconato to Dusino, Tiglioli, and Variglie; they were prolonged on the right bank of the Tanaro by posts at Isola, Blangero, San Marzanotto, and San Bartolomeo. The position of the Piedmontese posts so near to Asti rendered it difficult to supply the troops in that town with provisions, and in January 1746 Montal, the general commanding at Asti, sent out detachments which temporarily cleared the country between the Tanaro at Asti and the Belbo at Nizza.

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The situation gave Maillebois every cause for uneasiness, for it was evident that Charles Emmanuel must make some attempt to relieve Alessandria while the citadel still held out. Yet Maillebois with so many of his troops in the fortresses of Montferrat was not in a position to collect a mobile force strong enough to parry a serious blow. Moreover, a fresh Austrian army from the Tyrol was approaching the Duchy of Mantua, so that the scattered French and Spanish forces would shortly be attacked from both sides.

On February 6 Maillebois went to Milan to discuss the situation with the Infant and de Gages. He drew attention to the dangerous position of the French army in Montferrat and to the fact that the line of communications along the Riviera could at any time be cut by the Piedmontese army. He urged as the first necessary measure for the safety of both armies an immediate effort to take the citadel of Alessandria, the possession of which was indispensable for the security of the line of communications. But the Spanish head-quarters, governed by the orders of Elizabeth Farnese, would not listen to this proposal, and would not consent to any new action at Alessandria until they should have taken the citadel of Milan and the fortress of Pizzighettone. It was, however, agreed that in case of a Piedmontese attempt to provision Alessandria, the Spanish troops on the Ticino (22 battalions and 32 squadrons) should be sent to the assistance of Maillebois by Valenza and San Salvatore. Maillebois left Milan on February 11, and next day at Valenza learned that the Infant on hearing of the approach of Browne's army had sent troops to Parma, and had also ordered up the Spanish troops which garrisoned Loano and Oneglia. On February 18 the Austrian general, Browne, threw a bridge across the Po at Sacchetto, below the confluence of the Mincio with that river, and part of his army crossed the Po and occupied the right bank of the Secchia. A few days later Sardinian troops and militia from Saorgio and the neighbourhood made an attack on Castel Franco, a post about eight miles north of Ventimiglia. They were

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repulsed by French troops sent from San Remo, but the affair did not tend to reassure Maillebois as to the safety of the line of communications along which reinforcements and recruits were marching both to the French and Spanish armies.

Maillebois was in the greatest distress because the Spanish army was being handled in a fashion which outraged military common sense. If the two armies were to hold their own against the combination of the Austrian and Sardinian forces on the west with the new Austrian army advancing from the east, the only safe course was to keep their forces together. It was also of vital importance to keep clear the route by which they communicated with Genoa and with Provence. If the French army joined the Spanish in the direction either of Milan or of Piacenza, Charles Emmanuel and Lichtenstein would be able to recover Alessandria and move towards Novi or Serravalle, the line of communications would be cut and only a decisive victory first over Browne and then over Charles Emmanuel would save the combined army from an ignominious surrender. The sound course was to concentrate both armies in the neighbourhood of Alessandria and to hasten the capture of its citadel. The combined army then, holding the fortresses of Alessandria, Valenza, and Tortona, would probably be able to hold its ground until sufficiently reinforced to resume the offensive. The obstinacy with which the Spaniards clung to plans which Maillebois rightly regarded as military madness brought him to the verge of despair. His chief hope was in the prospect of a peace with the King of Sardinia. The Comte d'Argenson had written to him on December 28, a letter which must have reached him about the middle of January, telling him that negotiations had been opened and that he must do what he could to increase the temptation for the King of Sardinia to come to an understanding without in any way relaxing the military operations. Early in February came the letter from the Marquis d'Argenson of which the text has already been given, telling Maillebois that a negotiation was far advanced, that he was not to

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take advantage of Charles Emmanuel, and that until the treaty should have been signed his cue was the simple defensive and tranquillity. Maillebois, however, was not told of Charles Emmanuel's formal announcement that unless the armistice should have been proclaimed before March 1st he should consider that he had a free hand and might renew hostilities. This omission on the part of the Marquis d'Argenson was fatal and unpardonable. By the 1st of March Maillebois had received the letter in which his son announced that he should reach Turin on that day and proceed with the promulgation of an armistice. The Marshal therefore expected to hear on the 3rd or 4th that the armistice had been arranged, and some of his subordinates, among them certainly Montal, knew that this was his expectation.

On February 27 Montal, commanding at Asti, wrote to Maillebois that he had heard that two columns of artillery were to leave Turin next day for Asti and Acqui and that he had sent an agent to check this information. He enclosed a copy of a letter from Sennecterre to Chevert at Moncalvo giving a similar report about the enemy's movements. Maillebois replied that in case of need he would march to Fubine and Asti, and that the only object the enemy could have would be to relieve the citadel of Alessandria.

On the 28th Montal wrote wondering whether the Marshal had any confirmation of the reports about the enemy and lamenting his own lack of supplies. To this Maillebois replied that he could hardly believe in an attempt upon Asti at that moment, that they would see more clearly in a few days, and that he would then send instructions. On March 1 Montal sent reports of spies showing that Piedmontese troops were assembling round Cocconato and San Damiano, that they were accompanied by artillery, and that there was another body approaching Asti on the road from Alba. Maillebois replied asking Montal to continue to watch the enemy and particularly to ascertain whether they had guns, as without guns he thought they could do nothing serious. On the morning of the 3rd

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Montal wrote again saying that the castle of Asti was in good condition though not well provisioned, and enclosing further reports from spies with much detail of troops and guns at San Damiano, Villanuova, Cocconato, and Montechiaro. Next morning he sent further details about the enemy's troops and guns, and said: 'If you do not think fit to support me and you have not force enough to oppose the whole Piedmontese army, or if you think you could not arrive in time, I shall need orders telling me your plan and the course I am to adopt; in any case begin by occupying Annone, which is important.' Maillebois replied at 8 p.m. on the 4th that Montal was to take all precautions, to collect all his vehicles, to send away the sick, to occupy Castiglione, Quarto, Annone, and the stone bridge across the Versa, and to wait at Asti until the enemy should bring up heavy guns. He doubted whether the enemy could move guns to Asti considering the state of the roads. On the 4th at 6 p.m. Montal wrote again, enclosing reports from which he inferred that he would be attacked next day and again begging for orders, though he also reported the arrival of an officer sent by Maillebois with oral instructions.

The receipt of his son's letter had satisfied Maillebois that the armistice must have been arranged at Turin on the 1st or 2nd, and that he would be informed of it by the 3rd, he therefore could not believe that the movements reported by Montal implied an attack of any sort. He thought them merely preparatory to sending supplies into Alessandria under the terms of the armistice. But when on the 4th he was still without news from his son he became very uneasy. He sent an express messenger to Milan asking for the promised Spanish reinforcements. He wrote detailed orders to Montal for his retreat, which, however, was not to begin except after a fresh specific order. This letter never reached Montal.

It will be remembered that after the negotiations had been divulged at Versailles to the council of ministers, the fact that negotiations were pending had become known to the foreign diplomatists. This news had reached the

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Infant at Milan. Thereupon both the Infant and de Gages were convinced that the French were playing them false, that a treaty between France and Sardinia had been concluded, and that Maillebois had a secret understanding with Charles Emmanuel. Accordingly when Maillebois's messenger asking for the promised reinforcements reached Milan, the Infant refused to send them, and sent word to Maillebois that if he wanted reinforcements he must take them from the garrisons of Tortona, Alessandria, and Valenza.

From these garrisons Maillebois obtained 1,600 men; these were joined to the 17 battalions which were all he could collect, and with this force he set off on March 5 for the relief of Asti. He sent the advance-guard to Fubine, whence it could march either towards Asti or towards Moncalvo, and occupied the defile of Annone. On the 6th he sent Sennecterre with a portion of the garrison of Casale to Camagna and Vignale, to reinforce Moncalvo, and ordered Gramont with French troops from the Lomellina to march through Valenza to San Salvatore and Fubine. He reinforced his detachment at Annone and marched his main body to Fubine. Meanwhile, Chevert, who was holding Moncalvo with 3 battalions, was attacked by some 8 Austrian battalions which had come from Vercelli, through Ponte Stura. The commander of these Austrians intercepted a letter in which Maillebois informed Chevert that he should reach Moncalvo next day, whereupon the Austrians marched away towards Asti. On March 7 Maillebois, reinforced by Chevert from Moncalvo, reached Annone about 6 p.m. and had 12 guns fired as a signal to inform Montal at Asti that he was at hand for his relief. Early next morning, March 8, Maillebois resumed his march towards Asti, but was amazed to see a Piedmontese army encamped just outside the town, and to learn from prisoners that during the night Montal had surrendered.

The arrangements for the recovery of Asti and the relief of Alessandria had been made by Charles Emmanuel's Minister of War, Count Bogino. As a preliminary a large

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part of Lichtenstein's Austrian troops were collected near Vercelli together with the left wing of the Piedmontese. The Austrians were to attack the French and Spanish troops posted in the Lomellina in order to prevent them marching to the assistance of Maillebois. The Austrian general, Platz, with 8,000 Austrian troops was to march from the neighbourhood of Vercelli to Ponte Stura, and thence to Moncalvo, where he was to attack Chevert. By this march he would cut off the French posts at Camino and Gabiano. He would then take his orders from Leutrum, who was to have command of the whole enterprise. In the night of March 4–5 Leutrum started from Canale and marched to Sessant, where he was joined by the troops quartered in a semicircle between the Po and the Tanaro to the west of Asti, making altogether 31 battalions and 6 regiments of cavalry. From Sessant a portion of the troops moved into the valley of the Versa, and the whole force then approached Asti and enclosed it on all sides by 10 a.m. on the 5th. Batteries were built opposite the eastern and south-western gates, and against a portion of the north-western face of the place, and the artillery attack began on the 6th, on which day Piedmontese troops also established themselves in the village of Quarto, about five miles from Asti on the road towards Annone and Alessandria.

On the 7th Montal called a parley, and sent an officer to say that he could not understand how, when a peace had been arranged, the Piedmontese could attack French troops and bombard a town held by them. Leutrum replied that he knew nothing of a peace and was carrying out his orders. The French officer offered to evacuate the town, all but the citadel, the garrison not to serve again for three months. Leutrum replied that the garrison must become prisoners of war; the bombardment was resumed; at noon there was a second parley with no more result, and by evening a breach had been effected both in the eastern and the south-western fronts, though at each point there were inner defences still tenable. Just before dark the white flag was hoisted over the town, and a

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French general came out with the text of a capitulation. About this time the sound of guns was heard in the direction of Annone, but it did not prevent Montal from agreeing to Leutrum's terms, and a capitulation was signed in the middle of the night. The whole garrison of 9 battalions became prisoners of war.

During the day Maillebois made sure from prisoners and deserters that Asti had surrendered. There was therefore no point in his attacking with 16 battalions the Sardinian army of 31, increased to 39 during the day, when Platz with his Austrians from Moncalvo reached Quarto. He therefore marched back with his advance-guard to San Salvatore, whither he brought up the rest of his troops, and kept in touch by detachments left at Lu and Quargnento with the allied troops, which in Alessandria were blockading the citadel.

Maillebois was in an extremely difficult and delicate position. The loss of 9 battalions was in itself a serious matter. Without Spanish assistance it was impossible to hold any position between the Tanaro and the Po; but still more serious was the rupture between himself and the Spanish head-quarters, inevitable in the circumstances. The Infant and de Gages believed that the surrender of Asti had been arranged between Maillebois and the Piedmontese government. They thought that Maillebois had betrayed them, and indignation in the Spanish army rose to the highest pitch. Asti had fallen just at the moment when the Infant and de Gages were at their wits' end to know how to meet Browne's Austrian army, which was already approaching on both banks of the Po. They interpreted in the light of what seemed to them the treacherous conduct of Maillebois the strategical opinions which he had expressed when he had tried to dissuade them from crossing the Po to invade the Milanese.

On the 10th Lacy, the Spanish general commanding the troops of both armies in Alessandria, came to confer with Maillebois and showed him an order which he had received from the Infant to leave Alessandria with all the Spanish, Neapolitan, and Genoese troops and go to Tortona,

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where he was to leave a garrison and to proceed with the rest to Codogno.

Meanwhile Leutrum advanced with his whole force to Solero. On the 11th Lacy marched off to Tortona; Maillebois marched across the Tanaro at Bassignana and posted his troops in Piovera and Sale. Leutrum took supplies to the citadel of Alessandria and quartered his troops in the hills of the triangle between the Po and the Tanaro. Valenza was still held by a Spanish garrison.

Maillebois's position had all along been rendered difficult by the intervention of Elizabeth Farnese, who had throughout the campaign repeatedly written to the Infant to tell him that the all-important matter was for him to establish himself in the Duchy of Milan, and that the French insistence on keeping open the communications with France was inspired not by strategy but by policy. The Infant now wrote to Maillebois to say that the Spanish army would take care of itself and that Maillebois, as he cared for nothing but the safety of his person, might, if he liked, protect his precious communications. Maillebois took no notice of the taunt; he saw that the existence of both armies and the continuance of the Genoese alliance did in fact depend on his covering the road to Genoa and the route from Genoa to Nice, which was as vital to the Spaniards as to his own army. He was afraid that Charles Emmanuel might again take up the position at Bassignana from which he had been driven in the previous year, and by advancing from which he could interpose between the French and the Spanish armies. To prevent this he urged the Spaniards to hold fast to Valenza, so that in case of need they could there cross the Po and attack the position of Bassignana from the rear.

On the 13th Maillebois encamped at San Giuliano. On the 14th he made his dispositions to meet the new situation. He distributed his cavalry, 25 squadrons, between Pontecurone, Castelnuovo Scrivia, and Sale, where they covered his communications with the Spaniards, and might be able to feed their horses. His infantry was divided between Pozzolo Formigaro, Novi, and the

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villages between Novi and the Lemmo, while the battalion which had formed the garrison of Acqui was withdrawn to Ovada. On the 18th Lacy with his Spanish troops marched from Voghera to Montebello to rejoin the Spanish army. On the 24th the Piedmontese invested Casale, still held by a few companies which surrendered four days later.

Such then was the unfortunate result of d'Argenson's ill-conceived and ill-conducted negotiation. The military situation had already been compromised by the separation of the Spanish from the French army, due to Elizabeth Farnese's rash eagerness to see the Infant settled in his wished-for dominions of Milan and Parma, and to her utter disregard of the sound military judgement of Maillebois. D'Argenson's neglect to keep Maillebois properly informed, and the attempt to overreach Charles Emmanuel, had led to the disastrous surprise and capture of Asti. Even this might not have been irreparable had not the divulgence of the negotiations at Versailles destroyed at the critical moment the good understanding which, in spite of many difficulties, Maillebois had hitherto managed to preserve between himself, the Infant, and de Gages. The rest of the campaign is made up of the amazingly skilful efforts of Maillebois to save a situation now almost hopeless, efforts which were one and all frustrated by the ill-advised and unmilitary policy of the Spanish Court.

More than one historian, following the example of the Duc de Broglie, has regarded the breaking off of the negotiations with the Comte de Maillebois and the surprise of Asti as treacherous conduct on the part of Charles Emmanuel. This was not the view either of Louis XV or of d'Argenson. Charles Emmanuel himself wrote to Louis a letter in which he referred to the affair in terms which show that he considered his conduct to have been correct, and assuring Louis of his goodwill and his readiness to continue the negotiations. Louis in his reply said, 'No one in the world is more convinced than I am of the truth, the candour and religion of Your Majesty,' and added, 'my sentiments are still the same as when I sent M. de

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Champeaux to you'; and that he was 'ready to enter by a special treaty into engagements with Your Majesty which may end the war in Italy and even bring about the general peace'. D'Argenson indeed still hoped to continue the negotiations and to realize a part at least of his great scheme. Champeaux remained at Turin until Charles Emmanuel found, as the war continued, that his presence was embarrassing and gave him his passports.

All this time Vaureal at Madrid was vainly trying to persuade Philip and Elizabeth to agree to d'Argenson's chimerical treaty. It was not until the 8th of March, the day of the surrender of Asti, that Louis replied to Philip's letter of January 30. He then told Philip that the treaty was a *fait accompli*, and suggested that if Philip would accept it he might be able to obtain some addition to the territory to be given to Don Philip. This was accompanied by a letter from d'Argenson to Vaureal to the effect that unless Philip would accept the treaty France would abandon the Spanish alliance. At length, on the 25th of March, Philip wrote to Louis accepting the treaty, but relying on Louis's good offices for an extension of Don Philip's apanage.

The acquiescence of the Spanish Court in d'Argenson's plans came too late. But Louis's anxiety to recover the goodwill of his uncle the King of Spain led him to take a step which was fatal to the military operations. On the 5th of April he wrote to Don Philip, 'Marshal Maillebois will act in all things in concert with you and *by your orders*; I answer to you for his attachment to you and his obedience to my intentions, of which he is informed; accordingly you can and must again place your confidence in him as you did before'. Louis also sent the Duc de Noailles on a special embassy to Madrid, his mission being to appease the resentment of Elizabeth Farnese, and if he could to restore harmony between the two courts.

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iii. *Battle of Piacenza*

It will be remembered that Browne in February had sent troops across the Po, in the direction of Mirandola, and quartered them on the right bank of the Secchia. He now sent Berenklau from Mantua with 15 battalions and as many squadrons towards Milan. Berenklau crossed the Adda at Pizzighettone, marched through Codogno to Lodi, whence he drove out the Spaniards, and thence to Melegnano, while Lichtenstein, starting from Vigevano, crossed the Ticino and marched to meet him. On the night of March 18–19 the Infant evacuated Milan and quartered his troops (47 battalions and 53 squadrons) in and around Pavia.

A few days later Browne reinforced his troops behind the Secchia and marched through Luzzara to Guastalla, where he besieged the Spanish garrison. Castelar, who commanded the Spanish troops at Parma, set out to relieve Guastalla, but his advance-guard was beaten and he fell back to Parma. Thereupon the Austrians, following him, seized the bridge over the Enza at Sorbolo, and marched past Parma to the Taro, of which they occupied both banks, cutting off Castelar from Piacenza and the Spanish army. Castelar had been ordered by the Infant to abandon Parma and retire to Piacenza, but he was jealous of de Gages and apparently anxious to gain the favour of Elizabeth Farnese by holding her native town. When the Infant heard of Browne's advance towards Parma he abandoned Pavia, crossed the Po with his whole army, and marched by Stradella to Piacenza, sending on Corvolan with 12 battalions and 2 regiments of cavalry to reinforce Castelar. Corvolan took with him the order to Castelar to withdraw to Piacenza, which Castelar refused to obey, and kept Corvolan's corps with his own. The Infant advanced with his army to the Taro, which was flooded, so that he could not cross it.

Lichtenstein with Berenklau marched to reinforce Browne, leaving a detachment opposite Piacenza, on the

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north bank of the Po. The Infant sent orders to Castelar to retreat through the Apennines to Borgotaro, but there was an Austrian post at Fornovo on the Taro, and Castelar retreated by Cereto and Sarzana to Chiavari. The Infant then fell back to Piacenza and pushed across the Po to Codogno a detachment which drove away the Austrian post. This was on May 6.

While the Infant, paralysed by Castelar's obstinacy, was finding himself outmatched by the Austrians, Maillebois skilfully made use of his small force to embarrass, if he could not defeat, the Piedmontese army. As Maillebois had foreseen, Charles Emmanuel was anxious to recover Valenza. His first move was to try to disturb Maillebois by an attack on his communications at Nice or in the Western Riviera. He sent Leutrum to Ceva, Millesimo, and Cairo to see what could be done in that quarter, and Leutrum sent a strong division as far as Sospel on the road to Nice. But the French communications were too well guarded, and Leutrum returned to take charge of the siege of Valenza. On the north bank of the Po he had the place observed by cavalry, while on the south bank it was invested by no less than twenty battalions. Seven battalions in Alessandria were to observe Maillebois, and three more watched the banks of the Tanaro from Solero to Bassignana. Three battalions held Acqui and the hills in front of Acqui between the Bormida and the Orba at Ovada, while nine more under Della Rocca held the hills between Acqui and Nizza. Maillebois had seventeen battalions of his own and was reinforced by three Genoese battalions. With this small force he determined if possible to relieve Valenza, while at the same time covering his communications both with France and with the Spanish army. The first step was to dislodge the Piedmontese from the hills between Ovada and Acqui. He moved his troops to the Orba, below Ovada, and at the same time ordered a detachment from Savona to march through Sassello and Ponzone upon Acqui. The Piedmontese, thus threatened from two directions, fell back through Acqui behind the Bormida, where they were posted

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between Bistagno and Cassine. Maillebois then moved forward to the Bormida between Acqui and Cassine.

Maillebois next made a demonstration against the Piedmontese left at Bassignana, for which purpose he induced the Spanish commandant of Tortona to send a detachment from his garrison to Piovera. This induced Leutrum to strengthen his left, whereupon Maillebois suddenly bridged the Bormida at Rivalta, crossed the river, and sent 4 battalions to attack Della Rocca's post at Alice, while Chevert with an advance-guard of 8 battalions marched down the left bank of the Bormida, followed by Maillebois with 8 more. Della Rocca fell back to Nizza, while Chevert pushed on through Cantalupo and seized the bridge at Casalbagliano, Maillebois following him to Borgoratto and Gamalero. Maillebois's plan, now that he had in his possession a bridge across the Tanaro, was to attack the Piedmontese right at Solero, but at this point he learned that Valenza had surrendered. He thereupon burned the bridge at Casalbagliano and retired to Rivalta; here he left 4 battalions to cover his bridge, posted 6 at Alice, sent a detachment to besiege the citadel of Acqui, and another to Terzo. As soon as Acqui surrendered, he sent forward a detachment which occupied Nizza.

At this moment Maillebois received from France new instructions, telling him that Louis XV had decided that 'without regard to preserving his communications he was to take his whole force to join the Spanish army, in order to convince the Infant and the Court of Madrid that Louis XV attached more importance to the establishment of his son-in-law than to the security of his own frontiers'. In short, Louis XV, in order to recover the confidence of Elizabeth Farnese, was willing to sacrifice his army as well as that of the Infant, for it was obvious that, except in the improbable event of a decisive victory over the Austrians and Sardinians, there was no likelihood of the Infant obtaining any territory in Italy, nor, once the communications had been abandoned, of the return of either army to France except by capitulation.

On May 2, the date of the surrender of Valenza, the

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citadel of Parma surrendered to Lichtenstein, whose army then slowly advanced to Piacenza. On the 15th, Castelar from Chiavari reached Piacenza, where his troops rejoined those of the Infant, and where he received a commission as Captain-General, the fruit of his intrigue for the favour of Elizabeth Farnese, with whom the more competent de Gages was now in disgrace.

On receiving his new instructions, Maillebois blew up the walls of Acqui and marched with his main body to Novi and his advance-guard to Pozzolo Formigaro. Here he received a letter from the Infant asking for 10 of his battalions, which he sent off on May 18 and which joined the Spanish army on May 22. The Austrians and the Spaniards were facing one another at Piacenza, neither side willing to attack the other. The Austrians rested their right on the road to Cremona, and with their left held the village of Gossolengo on the Trebbia. The Spaniards had their left in Piacenza and their right stretching along the Tortona road almost as far as the Trebbia.

Charles Emmanuel had assembled his army at Alessandria, where he could cross the Bormida, either above the town to turn Maillebois's left, or below the town, with a view to interpose between the French and the Spanish armies. Maillebois sent reconnaissances to Bosco Marengo and to Maranzana on the left bank of the Bormida, near Cassine, to observe the Piedmontese movements.

Charles Emmanuel sent detachments up the Orba to Casal Cermelli and Portanuova. He then bridged the Bormida near Cantalupo and crossed to Castellazzo; thence he moved to Predosa and sent parties to Capriata and Ovada. Thereupon Maillebois withdrew to Rivalta on the Scrivia and sent his Genoese troops to Serravalle and Gavi. He had received the Infant's orders, repeated in spite of his remonstrances, to march with his whole army to Piacenza. Accordingly he sent orders to the allied troops garrisoning posts from Savona to Nice, that in case of need they were to fall back to the Var, and he himself set off with his troops from Rivalta and marched to Piacenza, where he joined the Spanish army on June 15.

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Charles Emmanuel followed him, marching on the 10th from Predosa to Novi, and on successive days to Rivalta, Castelnuovo Scrivia, Voghera, and Casteggio. Here he halted, seeing that he could hardly force the defile of Stradella held by the rear-guard of Maillebois.

On the 16th the combined army delivered its attack on the Austrians. On the left Spanish columns were to assault the right of the Austrian position, while on the right French columns were to turn the Austrian left; but the turning columns failed to make a sufficiently wide sweep and thus did not leave room enough for the orderly deployment of the centre, where there was some confusion, during which the Austrian cavalry, which far outnumbered that of the Allies, struck the allied right wing and drove it back in confusion. Maillebois, with difficulty, restored order. The Spaniards on the left, though they fought desperately, were ultimately driven back into the fortress, and the Infant then ordered the withdrawal of the whole army into the position of the previous day.

This was the decisive battle of the campaign, and as the Franco-Spanish losses were estimated at 12,000, killed, wounded, and prisoners, about a quarter of their whole force, the position of their army would have been desperate but for the protection of the fortress of Piacenza.

iv. *The combined army surrounded. Death of Philip V. Maillebois extricates the army. Retreat to Voghera. La Mina resumes the Command*

After the battle of Piacenza the two armies resumed their positions, the French and Spaniards along the Tortona road from Piacenza to San Antonio near the Trebbia, the Austrians with their right resting on the Po, facing the fortress, and their left on the canal of the Rifiuto. The Austrian commander, Lichtenstein, was sick; his place was taken by Botta d'Adorno, a Genoese in the Austrian service, and the Austrians were for a time reduced to inaction by disagreement between Botta and Charles Emmanuel. The King wished the two armies to

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take such a position as would leave the enemy no retreat except to the north or to the east, as he was anxious that the war should no longer be carried on in his own territories. The Austrians preferred to drive the enemy westward into Piedmont as they did not wish the Duchy of Milan to be laid waste, and were anxious to keep open for themselves the road to Naples, which Maria Theresa still hoped to recover.

Maillebois proposed that the French and Spanish armies should cross the Po by the bridge at Piacenza, which was protected by the fortress with its Spanish garrison. They should then march to Pavia, and thence should cross the Po to Tortona, in the rear of the Piedmontese army, which was near Stradella. This plan was accepted and Maillebois, after sending a detachment to Lodi, crossed the Po on June 27 with the French army, marched on the 28th to Ospedaletto and with the leading troops of his advance-guard as far as Belgiojoso. Seventy boats were taken up the Po to the Olona at San Zenone, where they were protected by a detachment of the advance-guard. On the 29th the Spaniards followed to Ospedaletto; next day the French main body advanced to Corte Olona, and Maillebois ordered Mirepoix, commanding the advance-guard, to push on to Pavia; but on July 1 the Infant, scared by the approach of Austrian troops to the Adda, ordered the French army to march back and rejoin him. Maillebois obeyed, but wrote to the Minister of War, begging to be relieved of his command. The French army returned to Orio on the left bank of the Lambro, and the seventy boats were brought back and secured in that river.

As soon as Charles Emmanuel heard that the French had crossed the Po he sent a party of infantry and cavalry to Pavia, another party to Rea to guard his bridge of boats across the Po, and disposed his army to watch the right bank of the Po, between Rea and Arena. Between Arena and the Trebbia the right bank of the Po was unguarded, as Botta declared he could spare no troops to watch the Po in that region. Charles Emmanuel was now afraid that the French might cross the Ticino, and collected

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his army on its left. At this stage the French were encamped at Casal Pusterlengo, the Spaniards at Codogno and Guardamiglio; the French advance-guard watching the Lambro and the Spanish outposts guarding the Adda from Castiglione to the Po and the Po from the Adda to Piacenza.

At this period Piedmontese troops and armed peasants made a series of attacks on the French communications along the Riviera at Dolceacqua, Melogno, San Giacomo and on the road from Ovada to Voltri, but they were all repulsed, either by French or by Genoese parties. Six French battalions were ordered from Alsace to reinforce the communication troops, and Maillebois ordered six battalions to be sent on from the line of communications through Genoa to join him.

The Infant, now that he was back with his army in a part of that Milanese territory of which he hoped to become sovereign, was most anxious to remain there, having apparently no grasp of the military situation. Fortunately for him, the Austrians and Piedmontese continued to disagree, the presence of the hostile army in the Milanese being as agreeable to Charles Emmanuel as it was disagreeable to the Austrians.

Charles Emmanuel proposed a new division of the allied forces, to which the Austrians agreed. Browne with 30 battalions and 36 squadrons of Austrians crossed the Po at Parpanese on July 25th, and marched to Santa Cristina, while Charles Emmanuel took command of his own and the rest of the Austrian troops, facing Piacenza, between the canal of the Rifiuto and the Trebbia. A small Austrian force under Nadasti was at San Lazzaro and the Austrian general Roth with further troops at Cremona and Pizzighettone. The French now put a strong advance-guard on the hill of San Colombano and at Chignolo. Browne thought them far too strong to be attacked and asked for reinforcements, while Maillebois tried to persuade the Infant that the allied army ought to attack Browne. But at this moment came news which completely paralysed the head-quarters of the Spanish army.

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On July 9 Philip V of Spain died and was succeeded by his son Ferdinand VI, the nephew of Charles Emmanuel. The Infant and his advisers thought that they could make no move until they had received fresh instructions from the new king. Indeed it was probable enough that there would be a complete change of Spanish policy, for the death of Philip meant the deposition of Elizabeth Farnese, who had been for more than thirty years the despotic ruler of that country, and would certainly not be able to exert on her step-son, the new king, the domination which she had exercised over his father.

Ferdinand VI, in his first communication to his half-brother the Infant, suggested negotiations with Charles Emmanuel, but Charles Emmanuel, now that fortune had turned in his favour, was not minded to negotiate. The Infant's inaction was, however, counterbalanced by that of the Austrians. Botta was unwilling to move, and Charles Emmanuel determined to leave him with the Austrian troops at Piacenza. With his Piedmontese army he marched to Parpanese on August 2, and joined Browne at Santa Cristina. He found the French position on the hill of San Colombano and on the front of the lower Lambro too strong to be attacked, so he decided to turn it, and by so doing to cut off the French and Spanish communications with Lodi, through which town they received their supplies from Venetian territory. Accordingly, he broke off his bridge at Parpanese, left Browne at Santa Cristina, and marched to San Angelo.

The Infant's army was now in a critical position, from which, however, Maillebois, with the assistance of Bourcet, found a way out. It was no use trying to persuade the Spaniards, who could not be brought to attack Browne when he was alone, to strike a blow against Browne when he was reinforced by the Piedmontese army; but Bourcet pointed out that, the principal hostile force being now north of the Po, the way to Tortona was open, provided the troops could re-cross the Po before the Austrians at Piacenza could interfere with them. This plan was adopted; very careful arrangements were made for the

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march of all the different portions of both armies to Corte San Andrea, at the mouth of the Lambro, and these marches carefully timed.

During the 8th Charles Emmanuel marched to Borghetto. In the evening of that day the French and Spanish troops set out and marched through the night. At the moment when they started 5,000 men were ferried across in the boats from the Lambro, and landed without interruption on the south bank, on a peninsula formed by the confluence of the Tidone with the Po. The Tidone in those days approached at Veratto to within a few hundred yards of the Po, it then turned to the right, and flowed parallel with the Po for about two miles as far as the confluence, and in these two miles it ran through ground so marshy as to be impassable. The troops ferried across landed on this strip. One party moved to its left and destroyed the bridge across the Tidone, which connected the peninsula with the mainland. Another marched through Veratto to Parpanese and burned the boats which had formed Charles Emmanuel's bridge. The rest halted at Veratto to guard the exit from the peninsula. During this time three bridges of boats were thrown across the Po, and by the evening of the 9th the whole army was safely landed on the peninsula. An advance-guard (20 battalions and 20 squadrons) under Pignatelli was ordered to hold the Tidone from Veratto to the Piacenza–Tortona road, which crossed the Tidone at Porto Tidone. But Pignatelli, while he placed his left wing at Veratto, pushed his right wing only half-way to Porto Tidone. Accordingly on the morning of the 10th, when the Austrians, who had set out from Piacenza on the 9th, approached the Tidone, and their advance-guard attacked Pignatelli in front, the troops immediately following pushed across the bridge at Porto Tidone to roll up Pignatelli from his right, while further troops as they came up crossed the bridge and faced north to push back the French and Spaniards towards the Po. Maillebois sent fresh brigades to meet this attack, which was repulsed. During the engagement the bulk of the Franco-Spanish army and its convoy of 4,000 wagons

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marched from the peninsula through Veratto and Castel Giovanni to Stradella. They were followed by the brigades which had fought at Porto Tidone as well as by 6,000 Spanish troops under Castelar which had formed the garrison of Piacenza. They had marched by the north bank of the Po, crossed the bridge of boats, and reached the army during the engagement. It was Castelar's troops which supplied the rear-guard after the action.

The passage of a great river like the Po between two hostile armies was rightly considered one of the most brilliant operations of the war. Its success was endangered by Pignatelli's neglect to occupy the exact position assigned to him.

Charles Emmanuel pushed on with his plan of turning the position on the Lambro and cutting off the communications of the combined army with Lodi. But he found the roads destroyed and all the bridges broken, so that his movements were much impeded. He had started from San Angelo on the 8th and by the evening of the 9th was encamped between Orio and Borghetto. But the combined army was gone, and when his scouts reached the three bridges over the Po, it was only to see that they had been burned. He heard the firing at Porto Tidone on the 10th, and when he started towards Pavia to re-cross the Po was again delayed by having to bridge the Lambro. It was the 15th before his army, which included Browne's troops, had crossed the Po and reached Casteggio, and by that time Botta with his slow-moving Austrian army had advanced no farther than Broni.

The Franco-Spanish army rested at Stradella on the 11th, and on the 12th marched to Voghera, where it halted for three days. Here it was met by the Spanish general La Mina, bringing with him a commission from the King of Spain to take command of the Spanish army, with the Infant under him, and an order recalling Castelar. Castelar and de Gages immediately left the army.

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v. *1746. Abandonment of Genoa. Retreat to Provence. Dismissal of Maillebois*

THE arrival of La Mina at Voghera marks a complete change of the spirit in which the war was conducted.

Ferdinand told his ministers that he intended to carry on the war, that he would make no peace which did not guarantee the Kingdom of Naples to his brother Charles and secure an establishment for his brother Philip, and that he meant to preserve complete harmony with France. Yet in fact he was determined to make no more sacrifices of Spanish lives and Spanish resources to carry out this policy.

La Mina was the general who, in 1743, had made the hopeless attack from Chianale on the Piedmontese entrenchments at Castel Delfino, and on that occasion had said that he would risk defeat and even the sacrifice of the Infant, as his orders were positive, and that 'when the wine has been drawn, it must be drunk'. It is evident that he was appointed in 1746 as a man who could be relied upon for absolute obedience, and who would take no notice of the wishes or opinions of the French officers in whose judgement, except during a brief period before and after the affair of Asti, the Infant and de Gages had had some confidence.

La Mina brought with him a letter from Ferdinand VI to Don Philip telling him to separate himself from his former advisers and in future to follow the advice of the new general. The instructions given to La Mina were not disclosed by him, but his conduct proved that while he was determined never to fight, he was equally determined never to admit that such was the tenor of his instructions. In his memoirs, however, he subsequently wrote that his special mission was 'to save the army without exposing a grenadier'.

These instructions had been given when the combined armies were in a desperate position in the angle between the Adda and the Po, shut in by Austrian troops watching the Adda, by the Austrian army at Piacenza, and the

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Austrian and Piedmontese forces between Lodi and the Lambro. At that time, no doubt, the one thing needful was to save the army; but when La Mina reached it, the army had already been saved. He found the Spanish and French troops, some 88 battalions and 83 squadrons, collected at Voghera, covered by outposts, both in the hills and on the plain. Its communications with Genoa and with France were protected by its position and by garrisons at the exposed points along the Riviera. It could be reached by reinforcements, of which some 5,000 men were on the march from Genoa. Browne's Austrians, 30 battalions and 36 squadrons, were at Montebello; Charles Emmanuel with 15 battalions and 15 squadrons of Piedmontese at Casteggio; and Botta with 44 battalions and 49 squadrons at Broni.

No doubt the French and Spanish battalions had been much reduced in strength, both by losses in action and by the hardships of the campaign. They may have been demoralized by their defeat at Piacenza, but must have had their spirits to some extent restored by the brilliant manœuvre which had brought them safely across the Po. A good general would have desired nothing so much as to raise their spirits by a series of successful partial engagements. For this there would now be favourable opportunities.

The plain between Alessandria and Voghera is intersected by rivers, in crossing which the enemy must divide his forces, and the hill country between the plain and Genoa abounds in positions favourable both for defence and for counter-strokes.

Maillebois was eager to make the most of these opportunities. By this course he hoped at least to delay the enemy until the army could be sufficiently reinforced to resume the offensive. But he was overruled by La Mina, now in supreme command and tied by his categorical instructions.

Maillebois proposed to stand and fight at Voghera. But La Mina raised so many difficulties that Maillebois had to agree to retreat to Tortona. Here the French army was

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reinforced by 12 battalions and 1,200 convalescents, brought up by Mirepoix from Genoa. Maillebois pointed out that the army at Tortona, between the mountains and the Scrivia, was in a bad position, as the enemy could pass the Scrivia lower down and then move across the plain towards Novi, covering his own communications with Alessandria and threatening, if not cutting off, the retreat of the Franco-Spanish army towards Genoa. He therefore proposed to place the army at Torre Garofoli on the road from Tortona to Alessandria, leaving a garrison in the fortress of Tortona. La Mina was deaf to this proposal, whereupon Maillebois suggested moving to a position at Novi. But he then discovered that Browne, with 20,000 Austrians, had crossed the Scrivia, and was marching on Novi. He at once proposed to attack Browne with the whole army, taking advantage of the opportunity to crush Browne's smaller force before it could be supported.

La Mina avoided an interview. He had sent off the Infant with an escort to Gavi, and so soon as he was sure that the Infant was well on the way, sent word to Maillebois that he was willing to fight, provided the Infant would give the order.

The army now marched up the right bank of the Scrivia towards Serravalle, a detachment having been sent on by Maillebois to hold Novi until it should arrive. But later in the day Maillebois learned that his detachment had been ordered by the Spanish commander to abandon Novi and retreat to Gavi. The strong position of Novi was thus abandoned to the enemy.

Next day the army reached Gavi, but La Mina with the Spanish troops pushed on to Voltaggio, where there was a two days' halt.

The hasty retreat from Tortona and the evacuation of Novi were equivalent to the abandonment of the campaign. The position at Novi not only covered the communication with Genoa, but gave opportunities for counter-strokes in the region between the Orba and the Bormida—a region in which Maillebois had already proved how much could be done even with very small forces. Here, near Novi, he

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would have had a central position in which to strike out, now against the Austrians, tied to their communications with Cremona or Pavia, and now against Charles Emmanuel, who, based on Alessandria and on Turin, would certainly move up the Bormida or the Tanaro against the French communications. But once the combined army had retired into the hills, its defence could only be temporary; for in the mountains the offensive with superior forces always has the advantage. Yet here too, the Austrians, slow and cumbrous in their movements, might be delayed for a long time. The only route from the plain to Genoa, practicable for an army, was that from Gavi by Voltaggio, over the Bocchetta pass.

A saddle, 2,600 feet high, approached by a narrow defile several miles long—this was a position which a small force could hold against any number, and which could be turned only by very arduous operations. The alternative road by the Scrivia to Busalla, and thence over the Col Giovi to Pontedecimo, was not made until the nineteenth century, though there was a poor road or track up the valley of the Scrivia.

While the French and Spanish head-quarters were at Voltaggio, Browne was near Novi, with advance-guards at Gavi and Serravalle, both of which had surrendered. Botta, with the rest of the Austrian army was at Tortona, while Charles Emmanuel, with 20 Piedmontese battalions was on the march towards Acqui, evidently intending to move up the Bormida, and to reach the Riviera at Savona or Finale, and thus to cut off the retreat of the combined army. To meet this danger a Spanish brigade was sent back to Oneglia, and two French brigades under Mirepoix to Savona. This was on the 22nd of August. Next day the combined forces retreated through the Bocchetta pass, where a rear-guard was posted, the Spaniards to Campomorone and the French to Pontedecimo. From here Maillebois wrote to the Comte d'Argenson to explain the situation. The necessity to send off troops to guard the road along the Riviera di Ponente left the army too weak to be able to resume the

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offensive, or even to hold its ground during the winter. The only safe course, therefore, was to continue the retreat to the county of Nice. La Mina wrote to the Spanish minister a similar letter, in which he said 'that the army, in abandoning the Riviera of Genoa, was giving up the only gate that led into Italy; but that keeping hold of Savoy and Nice would give a guarantee for the acquisition of a respectable establishment for the Infant'.

These letters were written on the 24th of August. The same day the army was set in march for Nice, leaving 7 brigades of infantry at the Bocchetta and between that pass and Genoa.

This decision was probably inevitable after the abandonment of Novi, by which the valley of the Bormida was left open to the enemy, for the distance from Acqui to Finale is about equal to that from Genoa to Finale. If Charles Emmanuel should reach the coast either at Savona or Finale before the Allies, their retreat would be cut off, and they must starve, for it was not possible, in presence of the British fleet, to feed the army during the winter at Genoa.

But the retreat involved the sacrifice of the Genoese republic, the security of which had been guaranteed by the treaty of Aranjuez.

The attention of Louis XV was at this time concentrated on the campaign which the Maréchal de Saxe was conducting in Flanders. The King, therefore, did not see his way to send reinforcements to his army in Italy. That being the case, Maillebois was obliged to make the best he could of a bad situation, rendered infinitely worse by the unwillingness of La Mina to risk any serious fighting. For the soul of an effectual defence, and even of a successful retreat, is in the readiness to make counter-strokes.

The first mark of a good general is that he always, to use the words of Marlborough, 'considers the good of the whole'. It is worth while trying to see the position of Maillebois from this point of view.

So long as there was in the plain between Novi,

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Alessandria, and Tortona a Franco-Spanish army, able and ready to fight, Charles Emmanuel must needs keep his army in the neighbourhood of Alessandria to prevent the invasion of Piedmont.

He could spare no considerable body of troops either to molest the French communications along the Riviera, or to attack the Alpine frontier of France. This had been the position in 1745, when the battle of Bassignana had thrown Piedmont open to invasion.

But now the presence of the Austrian army at Tortona, on the flank of any Franco-Spanish advance towards Piedmont, was a sufficient protection to that country, and the abandonment of Novi and Gavi amply proved that the commander of the Franco-Spanish army was in no mood to take the offensive. Charles Emmanuel, therefore, was free to move his own army in any direction that he might choose. He could invade either Savoy or Dauphiné, or try to recover the county of Nice. Accordingly the plan arranged between Charles Emmanuel and Botta was that the Austrian army should make for Genoa, while the Piedmontese should strike at the communications between Genoa and Nice. A blow at the communications must bring the enemy back or compel him to detach troops for their protection, and thereby render him too weak to hold his ground against the Austrians.

The freedom of action given to Charles Emmanuel by the Franco-Spanish retreat made it necessary for the French to take measures to protect their Alpine frontier. Maillebois, after the battle of Piacenza, had ordered the various battalions belonging to his command in Savoy, Dauphiné, and Provence, to march by the Riviera to reinforce him. He now countermanded these orders and sent instructions by which these troops were placed at the disposal of the local commanders for the defence of the Alpine passes.

The road from Genoa to Nice is a defile 100 miles long between the sea and the Apennines, which rise within 5 or 6 miles of the shore to a height of 3,000 or 4,000 feet.

To the north the slopes of the Apennines run down to

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Novi and Acqui at the edge of the plain of Alessandria, and to the plain of Piedmont at Cuneo and Mondovi. But between Mondovi and Acqui the hill country is prolonged to the Tanaro at Alba and Asti, and beyond Asti the region between the Tanaro and the Po is made up of the hills of Montferrat. All these hills are a serious obstacle to the movements of armies.

In the eighteenth century there were only two roads through them practicable for large bodies of troops. One, by the valley of the Bormida di Spigno, which rises at Mallare and Bormida on the north slope of the Apennines above Finale, runs through Carcare, Cairo, Dego, and Spigno to Acqui. The other, by the Tanaro, which rises in the spurs of the Alps to the west of the Col di Tenda, flows down by Ormea, Garessio, and Ceva to the plain of Piedmont, follows the edge of the plain to Cherasco, and then follows a wide valley through Alba and Asti to Alessandria.

These two routes had comparatively easy communications with the coast. A road that could be made available for carts leads from Savona, by Cadibona and Altare to Carcare on the Bormida, and is prolonged over the hills to Ceva.

From Albenga there is a way by the Col S. Bernardo to Garessio, and from Oneglia a path by Pieve di Teco to Ormea; but each of these crosses the Apennines at a height of more than 3,000 feet, while that from Savona to Altare never rises as high as 1,500. It was by these routes that Maillebois feared an attack, which would be the more dangerous because along the Riviera there was no cart-road, but only a mule-track along which the army, marching in single file, would be stretched out for many miles, unable to resist a sudden attack on its flank, and liable to be stopped by a comparatively small force blocking its way in one of the strong positions afforded by the countless spurs running down from the crest of the Apennines to the sea.

No one knew the possibilities open to the Piedmontese better than Maillebois, who in the previous year had

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taken extraordinary precautions to protect his march from Nice to Albenga against molestation from the valley of the Tanaro, and had moved his own army from Finale and Savona by the valley of the Bormida to Acqui. If the army was to reach Nice in safety, no time must be lost; and yet, however dire the necessity of leaving Genoa to her fate, a few days at any rate must be gained to give the Genoese time to prepare for the worst.

Mirepoix had been sent off with 2 brigades to Savona. He was a good general, familiar with the ground, and he at once fortified a position at the pass between Cadibona and Altare.

According to the plan made at Tortona, Charles Emmanuel sent back to Piedmont the bulk of his cavalry, which would be of no use in the hills. He left 10 battalions for the siege of Tortona, still held by a Spanish garrison, and marched off with the rest of his troops to Acqui, where by the 25th of August he had assembled 20 battalions. From here he marched south through the hills, dividing his force for convenience of marching into 3 columns, which united on the 30th at Dego, and marched on the 31st to Cairo with advance-guards at Altare, Mallare, and Pallare.

Botta had formed his army into 3 columns, of which 2 went by Novi and Serravalle towards Gavi and the Bocchetta, while the third made its way up the valley of the Scrivia in order to reach that of the Bisagno, which washes the eastern walls of Genoa. On the 1st of September the Austrians took the Bocchetta, which was not too strenuously defended, and next day at Lavezzara attacked the Spanish rear-guard, which held its ground all day and then fell back towards Genoa. On this day Charles Emmanuel, who had already been for two days encamped at Cairo, sent his best general, Leutrum, to reconnoitre Mirepoix's defences about Cadibona.

If the combined army should allow itself to be further engaged with the Austrians its retreat would be cut off. Accordingly on the 3rd of September the rear-guards at Campomorone and Pontedecimo marched away to join the

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rest of the army, which was at and beyond Voltri. The hospital at S. Pier d'Arena and the artillery had already been sent on towards Nice. The Austrian advance-guard followed the retiring rear-guard as far as S. Pier d'Arena. The Genoese government made its submission to Botta, who occupied all the gates of Genoa and imposed on the city a first contribution of 20,000,000 livres (£800,000) besides heavy requisitions in money and kind for the troops.

On the 6th Botta sent 10 battalions towards Savona with instructions to seize that place, of which the Austrian government was anxious to take possession.

The combined army reached Savona on the 4th, and on the 6th continued its march to Finale. Charles Emmanuel, knowing that the French must retreat, was content with demonstrations against Mirepoix's positions. He had arranged for demonstrations against their flank during their further march. Throughout the campaign he had had 5 battalions in the neighbourhood of Ceva. These had been reinforced during his march from Acqui by 5 of the 10 battalions that had been left at Tortona, and the whole 10 battalions were put under the command of the Marquis Balbian, who collected his troops at Bardineto with a view to attacking the combined army as it marched along the coast. On the 6th the French and Spaniards reached Finale, where they halted till the 9th.

Charles Emmanuel moved on the 7th to Cadibona. He had heard that Botta was moving troops to seize Savona, and as he had no intention of allowing the Austrians to take that place, he sent his advance-guard thither on the 8th and occupied the town with his army on the 9th just in time to anticipate the Austrians, whose advance-guard came up as soon as he was established there. The Genoese garrison held the castle, which the Piedmontese blockaded but did not attack. On the same day Balbian, advancing by the Col di Melogno, attacked the allied flank-guard at San Pantaleone. On the 10th the combined army continued its march, while Balbian again unsuccessfully attacked the rear-guard and halted at Gorra.

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The mutual jealousy of the Piedmontese and the Austrians, occasioned by the eagerness of each of them to obtain the port and fortress of Savona, had enabled the combined army to continue its retreat comparatively undisturbed. Balbian's detachment made repeated attempts to harass them from the hills that everywhere dominate the sea-route, but Maillebois took care to follow the good old rule that an army must never be committed to a defile without first protecting its flank by troops on the hills which command the defile, and as Charles Emmanuel's main body as well as the Austrian detachment lost time at Savona, Balbian, unsupported, could not effectively molest the march, though it was necessarily slow. There were halts of four days at Loano, and of two days at Porto Maurizio. The combined army reached Ventimiglia on the 23rd, while the Austrians and Piedmontese did not reach Porto Maurizio till the 25th.

At this stage Maillebois thought that the combined army might make a stand, and at last he was able to obtain La Mina's consent, for though the Infant had now little chance of obtaining an Italian Duchy, he might still be given Savoy and the county of Nice, provided that the army could maintain itself in possession of these territories.

Genoese territory ran along the coast as far as Monaco and included the valley of the Roja as far as Piena. The Genoese fortress of Ventimiglia commanding the mouth of the Roja lent itself to the proposed defence.

There were two principal routes by which the enemy could advance towards Nice. That by the coast, exceedingly difficult, guarded by the fortress of Ventimiglia, and that from the Col di Tenda through Saorgio, Sospel, and l'Escarène. Maillebois's plan was to hold the two roads strongly and to observe the space between them with adequate forces. 1,200 men were posted at Ventimiglia, 8 battalions at Mentone, 15 Spanish battalions under Campo-Santo at Sospel, and 17 more battalions at points between Sospel and Mentone, while the rest of the army moved on to Nice.

These positions were occupied on the 27th of September.

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On the 29th Charles Emmanuel, with 52 battalions, reached Bordighera, while he pushed a strong advance-guard up the valley of the Nervia to Dolceacqua. To Dolceacqua came also Balbian from Triora by Pigna.

From Dolceacqua Balbian made his way by the Col del Gio to Saorgio, and on the 4th of October marched down through Breil and took the castle of Piena.

Campo-Santo, fearing that he would be turned through Olivette, fell back from Sospel to l'Escarène. Next day Balbian pushed on to Sospel and Castillon.

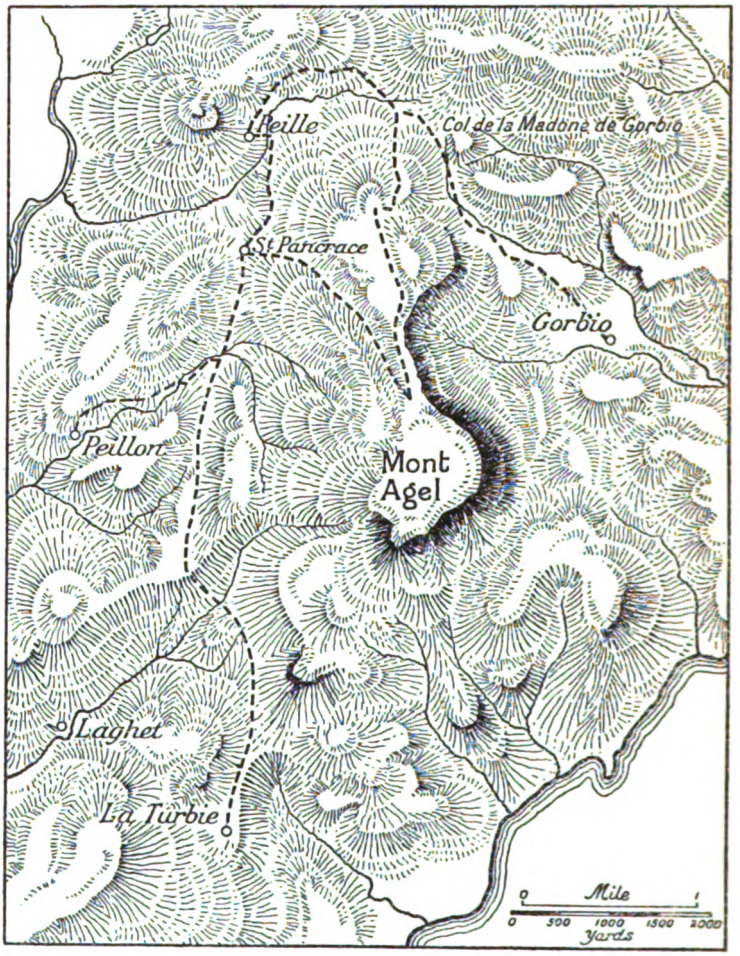
The retreat of the left exposed the right to be turned, so that the French troops were withdrawn from Ventimiglia, where a small garrison was left in the castle, to Mentone, and the whole body from Mentone to La Turbie. To avoid the fortress and castle of Ventimiglia, Charles Emmanuel marched with his left wing from Bordighera by Campo-Rosso and Dolceacqua to Bevera, and thence by St. Antonio by the valley of the Latte to Mentone. A detachment of this force took Castel d'Apio. The town of Ventimiglia opened its gates and the Piedmontese besieged the fort which commanded it.

At this time the relations between the French and Spanish Courts were again strained. Maria Theresa Antonia, daughter of Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese, who had been married to the Dauphin in 1745, had died on the 24th of July 1746.

Ferdinand VI immediately proposed that the Dauphin should marry his deceased wife's sister, Maria Antonia, but Louis XV would not listen to a proposal contrary to the law of the Church, and in writing to explain this to Ferdinand, asked his advice on the choice he should make of a second wife for his son. 'There are', he said, 'in Savoy three princesses. The connexion with Savoy is in our family tradition. We are ourselves the living incontestable proofs of the fact. The King of Sardinia in the last letter which he wrote to me at the time of that pretty business at Asti, assured me that the friendship between us was restored, and I should like to deal with him on no other footing.'

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This letter convinced the Spanish Court that Louis was still carrying on secret negotiations with Charles Emmanuel. The suggestion of a marriage with the Sardinian princess seems to have come from d'Argenson.



Mont Agel.

Charles Emmanuel showed no eagerness to accept it, and finally Louis told d'Argenson that there could be no question of a marriage when the 'fiancée would require a safe conduct to go to the wedding'. This was a fresh

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blow to d'Argenson, whose position had been shaken by the failure of his negotiations with Sardinia and with Spain and by the loss of Asti. On January 10, 1747, he was dismissed and was succeeded by the Marquis de Puysieulx.

These French negotiations causing, as they were bound to do, grave suspicion at Madrid of the sincerity of France, and of the real purpose of French policy, suspicions which were communicated to, and shared by La Mina, explain, if they do not justify, the lack of zeal on the part of the Spanish Commander, which inevitably permeated through the generals and infected the whole Spanish army.

Maillebois, though reduced to the position of a subordinate to La Mina, continued to do his best. He convinced La Mina that it was still possible to defend the southern part of the county of Nice, the region which lies south of the line from Cap Martin to Levens. This whole region had been thoroughly studied by Bourcet in 1744, and to Bourcet Maillebois now appealed for a plan of defence. Bourcet's doctrine of the defensive was that one should hold all the *débouchés* by which the enemy can advance; and as these in a mountainous country are few and can be perfectly known, it is possible, with due precautions, very greatly to embarrass an assailant, even though he commands much superior forces. The most important precaution is carefully to watch all the tracks by which any of your strong positions can be turned.

Bourcet placed his right at La Turbie and Laghet, where he had the hill in front of these two points entrenched. His centre was at Drap on the Paillon and his left at Levens. He was no believer in passive defence, but held that the strength of the defence was in counter-attack.

On the 13th of October Maillebois collected troops of his left and centre for an attack on the Piedmontese at l'Escarène. But the plan was upset by the carelessness of the general officer in charge of the post on his right. Maillebois had given instructions to this officer that 400 men should occupy Mont Agel, a flat-topped mountain as high as Snowdon, of which the eastern and southern or

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seaward faces are so steep as to be impracticable, while from the north it can be approached only by a hog's-back ridge a few feet wide; and from the west only by a foot-path from Peille, passing along the side of a slope so steep, that at the Chapel of S. Pancrace a few men can prevent the passage of any number. With 400 men on Mont Agel, a picquet to watch the hog's-back and another at S. Pancrace, no enemy could deliver an attack. But instead of 400 men on Mont Agel there were only 50, and there was no post either on the hog's-back or at S. Pancrace.

When in the morning a French officer going round the position to reconnoitre, reached the north end of Mont Agel, he saw the main body of the Piedmontese army encamped at Gorbio and a strong force—in fact 10 battalions—on the march from that place over the hills towards Peille. He saw that this was an attempt to turn his left; and not being well acquainted with the ground did not know how easily it could be stopped. He therefore withdrew the party from Mont Agel to the entrenched position in front of La Turbie. He had been seen by the officer commanding the enemy's troops, who sent a small party to reconnoitre towards Mont Agel.

The reconnaissance made its way along the hog's-back to Mont Agel, which was found unoccupied, whereupon the whole of the 10 battalions, unseen owing to a mist that came on, filed along the hog's-back to Mont Agel. Later in the day they moved down from Mont Agel and attacked the first French redoubt above La Turbie, and after a hard fight gained possession of it.

The redoubt commanded the whole position; the Piedmontese remained in it during the night and in the morning found the French position abandoned. The whole force from La Turbie had retreated at dawn and continued the retirement to Mont Gros, above Nice.

In Bourcet's opinion, if the order to post 400 men on Mont Agel had been obeyed and the two picquets posted as described, this disaster would not have happened. The best of plans will fail unless the execution is on a par with the design.

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La Mina now considered the defence of Nice impracticable, and Maillebois, though he was privately of the same opinion, insisted on the situation being submitted to a council of war, at which he raised the question whether Nice could still be defended, or whether they ought to blow up the fort of Mont Alban and the citadel of Villefranche. The general officers consulted held that Nice could not be defended and that no purpose would be served by the destruction of the two forts.

On the 18th of October the combined army retreated to the right bank of the Var, followed to the left bank by the Piedmontese and Austrian forces. On the 20th the castle of Ventimiglia surrendered to the Piedmontese.

There was now a pause in the operations, during which the Franco-Spanish army held positions on the right bank of the Var while the Sardinians reoccupied the county of Nice, and Charles Emmanuel and his Allies discussed the course they should now pursue.

Charles Emmanuel had every reason to be satisfied with the results of the campaign.

Maria Theresa, now that with her help Charles Emmanuel had recovered both Piedmont and Nice, was once more anxious to make use of her army for the reconquest of Naples. But the British Government thought it better to finish one war before beginning another.

The war with France, though it had taken a good turn in Italy, was in danger of being lost in the Netherlands, where on the 11th of October the Maréchal de Saxe had defeated Charles of Lorraine at Raucoux. What Louis had lost in Italy he had gained in Flanders. The retreat of Maillebois had been the price of the success of Maurice de Saxe.

The British Government proposed to pay back Louis in kind, and by attacking him from Italy, to compel him to take away troops from Flanders. Accordingly, the Government of George II proposed to Maria Theresa and Charles Emmanuel, both of whom were receiving British subsidies, that they should invade Provence and attack Toulon. This had been Marlborough's plan in 1707, when he had urged

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Prince Eugène to undertake the siege of Toulon. Prince Eugène had failed because at that time the Emperor Joseph had insisted on sending a part of his army to Naples, and this mistake ought not now to be repeated.

The British view prevailed, and it was decided that the Austrian and Piedmontese armies, assisted by the British fleet, should undertake the expedition against Toulon.

The three weeks during which the combined army was encamped at St. Laurent on the right bank of the Var were a time of great anxiety for Maillebois.

The brilliant campaign which ended at Bassignana had revealed his extraordinary ability as a strategist. He had seen its fruits thrown away; first by the perverse political strategy of the Spanish Court and its generals, and then by the impracticable policy of d'Argenson.

Next, though he had added lustre to his dignity as a marshal of France, he had been kept in subordination, first to de Gages, and then to La Mina. Spanish obstinacy had placed the combined army in a desperate position between the Lambro and the Adda, where its surrender had seemed inevitable. Yet from this position Maillebois had extricated it by one of the most skilful movements on record, though the design had nearly been wrecked in execution by the disobedient blunder of one of the Spanish generals. Then, when he felt still able to hold his ground, and if reinforced, to recover all that had been lost, La Mina had compelled him to abandon the last tenable position and therefore to retire through the mountains to leave Genoa to its fate, and to acquiesce in the retreat from Italy, which, though he conducted it with irreproachable foresight and judgement, he had felt it to be at once an unnecessary flight and a disgraceful desertion.

During the pause in the operations, Maillebois had to consider the chances that the Austrians and the Piedmontese would attempt the invasion of Provence. He thought this unlikely so long as they were confronted by the combined armies, especially if the French army should receive reinforcements. But he was much disturbed by the attitude of La Mina, who told him on the 30th of

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October that he had had instructions to join in the defence of the county of Nice, but now that Nice had been abandoned his orders were not to take part in the defence of Provence, but to march with his army to Savoy after sending a portion of it by sea to Naples.

No wonder that in the letter in which next day he reported this conversation to the Comte d'Argenson, Maillebois wrote:

'You will learn, perhaps a little late for me, and unhappily for the State, to whom are attributable the abandonment of Italy, of Genoa, and of the county of Nice, and the misfortunes of Provence; and I hope that the safety of this frontier will seem to you a matter of sufficient importance to decide you promptly to send reinforcements so considerable that we shall not have to count on the help of others. No doubt all the events which I foresee and those which I have been reporting to you for a long time, will be set down to my account, but as I have reason to rely on your equity, I hope that you will before long put me in a position to render to the King other services than that of sacrificing myself to no profit, and to silence by facts the intrigues and the jealousy which my misfortunes have let loose against me during a time when my conduct, if it had been made known, ought to have reduced them to silence.'

It is impossible, even after the lapse of more than a century and a half, to read these words unmoved.

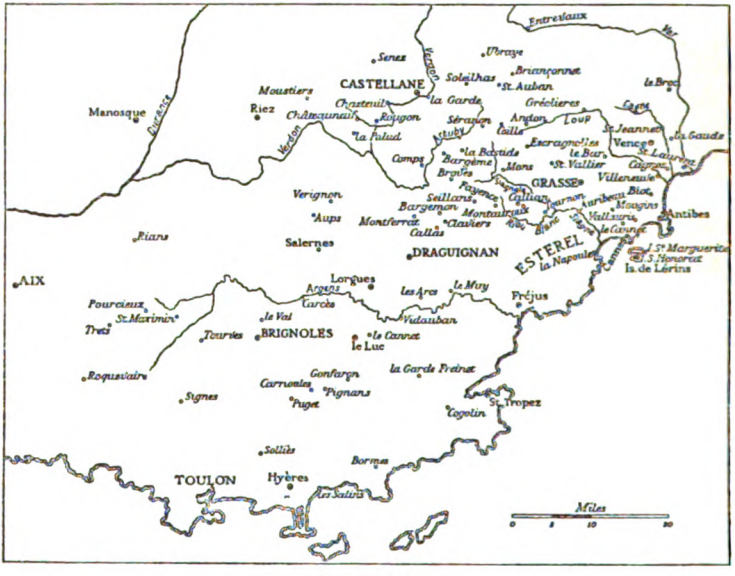
On the 5th of November La Mina sent off the Infant to Aix, and on the 7th marched off his army in 5 successive divisions, by Fréjus and Le Luc for Tarascon *en route* for Savoy, leaving behind only 10 battalions (3,200 men), who were to embark for Naples as soon as the order should come from Spain. Maillebois would then be left with his French troops, of which the infantry could not muster 11,000 men.

Whatever his feelings, Maillebois had to make ready for what was to come. The preparations at Nice for the invasion of Provence could not be concealed, and Maillebois had to consider how he would meet the attack of an army three times as strong as his own, assisted by the unopposed British fleet. He sent for 3 battalions from Barcellonnette and raised 12 battalions of militia in Provence. He was also promised 20 battalions from Flanders.

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On the 8th of November, the day after the withdrawal of the Spaniards, he took back the bulk of his troops to Biot, leaving picquets to watch the fords of the Var from Le Broc to the sea, supported by a brigade at Vence, a second at Cagnes, and a third at Villeneuve.

On the 13th he moved his camp to a new position between Grasse and Auribeau, and next day wrote to d'Argenson to explain his plans, in forming which he had



Provence.

the assistance of Bourcet. According to Bourcet, a plan of defence should embrace the whole region in which operations may be expected, and should include all the points against which any enterprise is to be feared. It should be based upon the reunion of all the troops in a single position where it will 'inspire with respect an offensive army wishing to operate on its right or its left', that is, from which it can strike at some point in the rear of the offensive army. In selecting the position and the distribution of the troops it was therefore necessary to consider the various routes of which the enemy might make use.

The enemy might cross the Var in its upper course at

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various points between Entrevaux and Le Broc; he would then have a choice of paths towards Castellane. To meet a turning movement in this quarter, Maillebois posted 5 battalions in a position near Seranon, where all these paths converged. From the lower Var the enemy's army might advance either through Vence or Cagnes towards Grasse and Draguignan, or from Cagnes by Antibes, Cannes, and the Esterel to Fréjus.

If Maillebois attempted to hold the southern route, the enemy, by following the northern one, could cut him off from reinforcements and compel his retreat to Toulon, after which the enemy might move on Marseilles. To prevent that he had moved from Biot to the position near Grasse.

Here the army was posted along the crest of a slope, covered with vineyard terraces, each of which was supported by a stone wall 6 or 8 feet high. It was evidently impossible for troops to charge up this slope. The left of the position rested on the mountains at Grasse, and the right on the Siagne at Auribeau. It would be hard to find any position more difficult to attack, either in front or flank: nor could it well be turned either through the difficult mountains on the left or the rugged, wooded hills on the right. Auribeau is only 5 miles from the sea.

The position absolutely blocked the northern road, and the enemy's army, if it advanced along the southern road, exposed its flank to an attack, and if it should push on through the Esterel towards Fréjus, Maillebois by a short advance could cut off its communications while it was entangled in a defile. In case he should be compelled to retire, Maillebois had a safe retreat behind the defiles of the Siagnole to a good position near the castle of Tournon, between the Siagne and the Riou Blanc.

On the southern route he proposed to place at the entrance to the Esterel a small force of 15 or 18 battalions under Mirepoix, which, if it had to fall back, would cover the road to Toulon and would retreat to that place. The second position at Tournon would stop an advance on the northern road, and lay on the flank of an enemy's march through the Esterel.

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If he should be driven from Tournon he would fall back some 12 miles to a third position, in which his main army would be at Callas and Bargemon, and Mirepoix's detachment at Le Muy. In case he should be still unable to hold his ground he would fall back to a position on the Verdon, between Moustiers and the confluence of the Verdon with the Durance. From here his retreat would be to the Durance between Manosque and Sisteron, where he might expect the reinforcement of 20 battalions, which had at last been promised him.

This plan was a perfect solution of one of the most difficult strategical problems imaginable. Each of the three positions selected covered the army's communications to the Durance and its line of retreat in that direction. If the enemy followed the northern road he would find himself at each stage confronted by Maillebois's army in a position which to attack would have required a combination of great skill and daring; and each of the positions was within an easy march of the southern road, where the enemy would be delayed by Mirepoix's detachment, while exposing himself to Maillebois's attack in flank.

But Louis XV attached much less importance to first-rate generalship than to recovering the goodwill of his great-nephew Ferdinand. And Ferdinand refused to allow La Mina's army to continue its co-operation with the French unless Maillebois were dismissed.

The choice of a successor to Maillebois fell upon Marshal Belle-Isle, who with his brother had been taken prisoner in Hanover in 1744 and sent to England. After his exchange in 1745 he had lived in retirement at Begui, where he received the King's order to take up his new command. While he was making his preparations he sent on as his deputy to the army his brother the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, who had recently greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Raucoux.

The Chevalier de Belle-Isle arrived at Grasse on the 19th of November and it was from him that Maillebois received the news that he was relieved of his command. Two days later Maillebois left the army.

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VIII. BELLE-ISLE AND GENOA

i. *Invasion of Provence. Belle-Isle's Retreat. Rising of Genoa. Belle-Isle recovers Provence*

At the end of November there were assembled in the neighbourhood of Nice 42 Austrian and 18 Piedmontese battalions with 5,000 horse, making a total of perhaps 43,000 men. The communications were now clear, for the castle of Ventimiglia had surrendered in October and the forts of Mont Alban and Villefranche at the beginning of November. The citadel of Savona was besieged by Piedmontese troops, Genoa was occupied by the Austrians, and Tortona had surrendered on the 23rd of November. The British fleet on the coast assisted the supply of the army and was to co-operate with its guns at the crossing of the Var. Everything was ready for the advance, when, on the 20th of November, Charles Emmanuel at Nice fell ill of small-pox. Thereupon he sent to Genoa for the Austrian General, Browne, to command the army. On the 30th of November, while the British fleet bombarded St. Laurent, Browne's advanced troops in 6 columns crossed the Var between La Gaude and the sea and encamped between the Var and the Cagne, while bridges were built across the Var.

The French outposts from La Gaude fell back upon the supports at Vence, and retreated in good order to Grasse. Those near St. Laurent fell back to the Cagne and Villeneuve, where Mirepoix had now 19 battalions and 11 squadrons, 5,000 men, as had been arranged by Maillebois.

The new commander of the French army, the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, on his way to join the army had met the Infant at Pont-Saint-Esprit and La Mina at Avignon. He had with some difficulty persuaded La Mina to agree that the Spanish troops, of which the 5 successive divisions

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were between Tarascon and Aix, should halt until such time as the enemy should have crossed the Var.

They were then to move forward towards the French army and to take post at Brignoles, Tourves, and Saint Maximin. Possibly it was this promise of La Mina's which induced Belle-Isle to abandon Maillebois's plan of a series of positions on the southern edge of the mountain region, each of which threatened the flank of an advancing enemy, and instead, to place his army in front of the enemy, falling back if necessary, not on the mountains to the north, but on the hilly region to the south of the roads from the Esterel towards Aix. No doubt he could count in the near future on forces larger than those with which Maillebois had had to reckon. Maillebois had been promised a reinforcement of 20 battalions; Belle-Isle was promised 40 and counted also on La Mina's army. He had not had Maillebois's experience of the ways of the Spanish commander.

In accordance with the Maréchal de Belle-Isle's changed plan, his brother the Chevalier, as soon as the enemy had crossed the Var, decided, in spite of Bourcet's protests, to abandon the commanding position of Grasse–Auribeau, and on the 1st of December moved the army to that of Tournon, and ordered Mirepoix with the right flank detachment to fall back to La Napoule.

On the 2nd of December 1746 the Maréchal de Belle-Isle arrived at the camp of Tournon and took over the command. He gave orders to remove to new points farther south the magazines which Maillebois had formed at Draguignan, Aups, and Riez. On the 3rd Browne moved 18 battalions to Grasse, his main body to Biot, and pushed on a party to invest Antibes. On the 5th Austrian parties appeared at Vallauris and Le Cannet. Belle-Isle inferred that Browne was making for Fréjus and the road by Le Luc to Toulon.

Accordingly, on the 8th he retreated to Lorgues and ordered Mirepoix to withdraw his cavalry to Vidauban and his infantry to Le Muy, while he left parties at Draguignan and Callas. The Comte de Maillebois, Quartermaster-

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General, thought that Belle-Isle was making a mistake in departing from the plan of Marshal Maillebois. He therefore resigned, and was succeeded by M. de Mortagne.

On the 10th Belle-Isle moved across the Argens from Lorgues to Le Cannet and Le Luc, ordered the detachment which Maillebois had posted at Séranon to retire to Castellane, and sent small parties to Bormes and Les Salins d'Hyères to guard against a landing from the British fleet. The same day also, when the several columns of the Spanish army were at Brignoles, Tourves, Saint Maximin, Pourcieux, and Trets, La Mina ordered the 10 Spanish battalions which had hitherto formed part of the French army to march off to Marseilles and there to embark for Naples.

At this time the Austrian main body was encamped at Cannes, its right detachment at Grasse, with an advance-guard at Draguignan, while on the right a detachment under d'Ormea reached Castellane, where it threatened the magazines which Maillebois had formed at Moustiers and Riez. On the 15th an Austrian force of some 12,000 of all arms advanced to Draguignan, from which place the French post fell back to Lorgues. La Mina now refused to move his Spanish troops or to allow them to fight before the arrival of French reinforcements. Thereupon Belle-Isle fell back with his army to Puget, and brought back Mirepoix to Gonfaron, Pignans, and Carnoules. He also sent a detachment to Signes to protect the communications between Toulon and Marseilles.

La Mina, leaving small parties at Brignoles and Le Val, took back the rest of his troops to points on the road between Saint Maximin and Aix.

The Austro-Piedmontese with the assistance of the British fleet took possession of the Isles de Lérins, where they found large stores of provisions. Belle-Isle, more and more anxious for the safety of Toulon and Marseilles, went to Aix to confer with La Mina, hoping to persuade him to move forward to his help. La Mina refused to budge until reinforcements should arrive, and Belle-Isle wrote to Paris to complain of La Mina's conduct. On his

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return to Puget the longed-for reinforcements began to arrive, and by the 31st of December Belle-Isle found himself at the head of 85 battalions and 22 squadrons, while La Mina had 25 battalions and 14 squadrons, the total strength of both armies amounting to 44,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry.

Belle-Isle with his main body of 39 battalions was encamped at Puget and Carnoules. The advance-guard, under Mirepoix, of 3,800 men was encamped at Pignans and Gonfaron, with its outposts stretching from Le Cannet to the right through La Garde-Freinet and Cogolin to St. Tropez. Behind the main body 23 battalions were distributed in quarters from Hyères along the two roads through Solliés and Toulon to Roquevaire.

The Spanish army had its advance-guard, some 3,000 men, at Brignoles and Le Val, and the remainder, about 13,000, divided between St. Maximin and Aix, at which place 13 battalions of French reinforcements had arrived. In the hill country to the north Chevert had 13 battalions at Riez connected by a battalion at Rians with the Spanish army.

Browne now had his main body encamped at Cannes, Mougins, and Grasse, with advance-parties at Fréjus, Le Muy, Les Arcs, and Draguignan, and a strong detachment under d'Ormea at Castellane. The British fleet was bombarding Antibes, whither were brought up, after the surrender of Savona on December 18, the guns which had been used against that place.

Charles Emmanuel at Nice was now convalescent.

The Austrians, in great difficulties for supply, made heavy requisitions upon all the country which they occupied, and in particular the detachment at Castellane sent out foragers who caused much uneasiness in the region between the Upper Var and Moustiers. As a precaution the governor of Dauphiné sent a field officer to Gap with instructions to place a picquet of 50 regular troops at each of half a dozen bridges or fords of the Durance between Savines and Sisteron.

Belle-Isle's retreat from Grasse to Puget before an

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enemy the reverse of enterprising seems as hard to explain as his hasty abandonment of Maillebois's plan of defence. With reasonable determination Browne might have followed him through Draguignan and pushed on towards Aix until he was in a central position between the Spanish and French armies, which he ought then to have beaten in succession. But Browne was paralysed by events beyond his control, which, however, were known to Belle-Isle and ought to have relieved him from anxiety.

While Belle-Isle was retreating from Le Luc to Puget he received from a Marseillais, who had left Genoa by sea on the 11th of December and reached Frèjus on the 13th, an account of the extraordinary rising by which the Austrians had been driven out of Genoa.

The Austrian general Botta had treated the Genoese with great brutality, so that they were to the last degree exasperated. On the 5th of December an Austrian squad was dragging a mortar through the streets when it broke through the pavement, making a deep hole into which it fell. The Austrian officer asked the passers-by to help his men to lift the mortar out of the hole. When he thought they were not working hard enough he began to belabour them with his stick, whereupon a crowd collected and threw stones at the officer and his men, who took refuge in a Genoese guard-house.

Next day a fresh Austrian party came to bring away the mortar, but the crowd again drove them off, and proceeded to break open an armoury and distribute the weapons. Botta spent a day or two negotiating with the Genoese government, but each day the rising became more serious, and on the 10th the whole population, by this time armed, and joined by those of the Genoese troops who had not been made prisoners of war by the Austrians, chased the Austrian troops from the city. A large party followed the retreating Austrians to the Bocchetta and occupied that pass. On the 11th the people seized the magazines containing the supplies for the Austrian army and the vessels in the harbour laden with corn destined for Browne's forces.

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At the beginning of January Belle-Isle pushed on his preparations for a forward movement. The chief difficulty was that of supply. Provisions were collected in Languedoc and in the region of Lyons. A few picked officers were sent by sea to Genoa, taking with them 200,000 livres in cash, and a promise of help to be sent as soon as possible. Troops were placed in the various islands on the coast of Provence as a protection against British landings. After the reinforcements had begun to arrive La Mina agreed to Belle-Isle's plan of operations, and ordered up from Savoy 2,300 Swiss troops in the Spanish service. He also moved forward his troops to Brignoles and Barjols.

Belle-Isle's operations in his short offensive campaign against Browne, which now began, were conducted with skill and judgement, and are a typical example of eighteenth-century generalship in the peculiar geographical conditions of Provence.

As a preliminary to the general advance Chevert sent forward a detachment from Riez to La Palud, Châteauneuf, Rougon, and Chasteil, while 1,200 men under Pusigneux were sent round towards Entrevaux, where there was a French garrison, and from this body parties were posted at Briançonnet, St. Auban, Ubraye, Soleilhas, and Senez. The Spaniards sent 2,000 men to Aups and Verignon to connect with Chevert. A few days later the troops of the left wing were put under the command of Lieutenant-General Maulevrier, and the Swiss from Savoy were directed through Sisteron to Senez to reinforce him. By the 20th of January Belle-Isle had brought up all his troops from the region between Hyères and Aix, so that the whole army, 50,000 strong, was collected into four camps, Belle-Isle with the main body of the French at Puget and Carnoules, La Mina at Brignoles, and Maulevrier at Riez.

The advance began on the 21st, when Belle-Isle moved to Gonfaron, preceded by Mirepoix with the advance-guard to Le Luc, La Mina to Carces, while Maulevrier attacked the Austrians and Piedmontese at Castellane,

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taking prisoner their Austrian general and inflicting losses amounting in killed, wounded, and prisoners to 1,000 casualties. Maulevrier then moved to Rougon, leaving the Swiss at Castellane. On the 22nd Belle-Isle moved to Le Luc, and his advance-guard, under d'Arnault, towards Lorgues, which was occupied by its leading party, while Mirepoix with the right wing detachment advanced to Vidauban and with his advance-guard to Les Arcs. During the 23rd bridges were thrown across the Argens, and on the 24th d'Arnault's advance-guard moved to Draguignan, Mirepoix to Le Muy, Belle-Isle to Lorgues, La Mina to Lorgues and Salernes. On the 25th Mirepoix reached Frèjus, Belle-Isle Draguignan, La Mina Montferrat. On this day Maulevrier crossed the Verdon and moved forward to Comps; the Swiss troops from Castellane to La Garde.

On the 26th the main bodies halted to allow the artillery to come up, the advance-guards pushed on to Brovés and Seillans, and Maulevrier to Bargème, while on the right Mirepoix pushed his advance-guard into the Esterel. On the 27th Belle-Isle moved to Claviers with a brigade at Seillans, La Mina to Brovés and his advance-guard to Bargème, while Maulevrier went from Bargème to La Bastide d'Esclapon.

On the 28th Maulevrier moved to Caille, where he was joined by the Swiss from Castellane, and La Mina to Bargème. Belle-Isle pushed forward d'Arnault to Tournon, 2 brigades to Callian, and his main body to Fayence. On the 29th Belle-Isle encamped his army at Montauroux, reinforcing d'Arnault with a brigade and sending 3 brigades to Mons to connect with La Mina, who marched to Seranon. On the 30th the whole army moved up to the Siagne, Mirepoix to La Napoule, Belle-Isle bringing batteries from Tournon to the river bank to overpower the artillery of the Austrians, who had broken the bridge, and La Mina to Escragnolles, while Maulevrier moved to Andon at the head of the valley of the Loup.

During the night the Austrians and Piedmontese retreated towards Cagnes, and on the 31st Mirepoix's advance-

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guard marched to Antibes, and Belle-Isle's to Grasse. La Mina marched to St. Vallier, his advance-guard to Le Bar, and Maulevrier from Andon to Gréolières.

On the 1st of February Belle-Isle and La Mina united their troops at Grasse; d'Arnault marched towards Cagnes, followed by the Chevalier de Belle-Isle with 6,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry; La Mina sent 4,000 men towards Vence, and Maulevrier set out from Gréolières for St. Jeannet. On the 2nd of February the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, with his own troops and the advance-guard, attacked at Villeneuve the Austrian rear-guard which was covering the retreat of the Austro-Piedmontese across the Var. The crossing was safely effected, but the rear-guard was so hard pressed that Belle-Isle's troops followed it half-way across the bridge, of which, however, the Piedmontese were able just in time to set on fire the Nice end.

Belle-Isle had conducted the twelve days' campaign upon sound principles. The region between Draguignan and Cannes is hilly and wooded, and traversed by only one practicable road, that through Le Muy, Fréjus, and the Esterel. To the east it is bounded by the Siagne, difficult to cross except near its mouth and at the bridges. The line of the Siagne was therefore a strong position for Browne. Accordingly Belle-Isle arranged to turn it. Sending only Mirepoix's detachment through the Esterel, he moved his main body along the road from Bargemon to Grasse, while La Mina, marching from Seranon on Grasse, avoided the Siagne altogether and aimed at Browne's flank; Maulevrier moving through Gréolières, struck at his communications. Bell-Isle, La Mina, and Maulevrier, as soon as they approached the enemy, were in supporting distance of one another. Thus the whole movement illustrates Napoleon's precept, 'that you should overlap and turn a wing without dividing your army'. It was evidently inspired by Bourcet.

The manœuvre was not put to any severe test because Browne made no serious defence. His outposts destroyed bridges and fought minor rear-guard engagements. He could not prudently do more. The rising at Genoa had

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cut off his supplies, and the fortress of Antibes embarrassed the business of obtaining provisions from the British fleet. He had kept his main body at Cannes and Grasse until he should have taken Antibes, and when retreat came he had to hurry away the siege material from that place before he could withdraw across the Var.

On the 2nd of February 1747, when the Austrians and Piedmontese had recrossed the Var, the campaign ended. The wintry weather prevented further operations. The troops of both armies were billeted in the country each on their own side of the river. The Piedmontese made various attempts to complete the destruction of the bridge across the Var. They did not succeed in completely burning it until the beginning of March, when both armies moved off to their winter quarters. Fifteen Piedmontese and ten Austrian battalions remained in the county of Nice and the rest of both Piedmontese and Austrian troops marched off, either by the Riviera to reinforce Botta at Genoa, or by the Col di Tenda to Piedmont.

Belle-Isle sent off 18 battalions to Dauphiné and 6 to Franche-Comté, quartered 71 between the Var and the Argens, and sent 3 to Languedoc along with La Mina's 25 Spanish battalions.

ii. *Siege of Genoa*

In September 1746 the desertion of Genoa by the French and Spanish armies, and its occupation by the Austrians, had put an end to the prospect of obtaining by force of arms possession of the Duchies which the Spanish and French courts hoped to acquire for the Infant Don Philip. The French had learned by bitter experience the difficulty of invading Italy through the Alps, when the passes were held by Piedmont with Austrian support. With an Austrian garrison at Genoa and a Piedmontese garrison in the castle of Savona the alternative route by the Riviera was effectively closed. But in December the rising of the Genoese and the expulsion of the Austrians from their city offered a fresh opportunity to France and

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Spain provided they could make use of it. For this purpose they must at all cost prevent the recapture of Genoa by the Austrians. They must assist the Genoese to defend their city, while Belle-Isle's army must make such an attack upon the Austrians and Piedmontese as would compel them to collect all their forces to resist it, and oblige them to abandon the siege in order to reinforce their armies in the field.

By the end of February 1747 Belle-Isle had driven out the Austrian and Piedmontese invaders from French territory, and his outposts held the frontier line along the Var. The slopes of the Maritime Alps are covered with snow till the end of April. No further operations were practicable for Belle-Isle's army till May and he had therefore sent the troops to their winter quarters. But before doing so he had made such arrangements as he could to assist the defence of Genoa. Communications by land were blocked by Leutrum's army, and the sea route was watched by British cruisers. In February Belle-Isle sent off by sea a group of picked French officers, and 200,000 livres, and these safely reached Genoa. In March he embarked 4,000 French and 2,000 Spanish troops, running the risk of their capture by the British. Some of the French transports were taken and the ships conveying the Spanish troops had to put back to port. But 3,000 of the French troops reached Genoa in March. A second contingent of 4,000 Spanish and 2,000 French troops was made ready to be sent as opportunity should offer. Belle-Isle then left the army in charge of his brother and returned to Versailles, where he occupied himself with the plan of the coming campaign, of which the main purpose must be the relief of Genoa.

After his retreat from Genoa in December 1746 Botta had collected his troops at Novi and waited for reinforcements. The Genoese prepared as well as they could to meet the Austrian attack. They had some 4,000 of their own troops who had not been sent away as prisoners, and they had distributed arms not only to the population of the city, but to the peasants of the neighbouring districts both

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to the east and to the west. In January 1747 Botta sent to the Bocchetta a detachment which drove away the peasants and occupied the pass.

At the end of January Maria Theresa recalled Botta and put Schulenburg in command of the troops destined for the siege. During February Schulenburg sent forward parties, probably only for reconnaissance, to Campo-Morone, to Masone, and towards Voltri. These were all repulsed, with the result that the Genoese were encouraged in their hopes of a successful defence of the city, and the Austrians began to realize that its recovery would be a serious undertaking. Botta had left at Novi 24 battalions, and Browne sent to Schulenburg 32 more, while Charles Emmanuel promised a strong reinforcement of Piedmontese troops. It was the beginning of April before Schulenburg was ready to move, and the time thus perhaps inevitably lost allowed the Genoese to receive the first timely assistance of their French allies. In the third week in March the French Brigadier-General de Mauriac landed at Genoa with those 3 of the 6 battalions sent by Belle-Isle which had escaped the British cruisers. By this time the popular leaders who had conducted the rising, and for the time had pushed aside the authority of the oligarchical senate, acquiesced in the resumption by that body of its powers, and the Senate encouraged Mauriac to take charge of the defence. Moreover, from this time on, parties of French and Spanish troops sent from Provence in ships which hugged the coast and evaded the not too rigorous observation of the British cruisers, brought occasional further reinforcements to the city. During March Austrian parties were again repulsed near Voltri and in the upper valley of the Scrivia.

The key of the defences was Fort Sperone at the point where the high ridge, running down from the North, forks to enclose the town. The weak points were the spaces on each side of the town between the sea and the ends of the two ridges running down from Sperone. To cover these weak spots two forts were built, one on the west at Belvedere, which commanded the mouth of the Polcevera

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Valley, the other at the Madonna del Monte beyond the Bisagno, commanding the lower valley of that river and overlooking the valley of the Sturla.

On the 11th of April Schulenburg began his movement for the investment of the city. The harbour was watched by the British fleet and Schulenburg's aim was to surround the place on land. For this purpose he must so move his troops that they should simultaneously approach it from every direction and thus completely enclose it. He therefore subdivided his army and sent a column by every one of the available routes. The first started from Ovada, ascended the Stura Valley, and, avoiding the Genoese castle of Masone, crossed the Apennines by the pass which leads to Voltri. It was then to descend towards Sestri Ponente and Cornigliano. The second and third columns crossed by the Bocchetta and the pass Dei Giovi into the Polcevera Valley. Three other columns ascended the valley of the Scrivia, from which several routes lead over the crest of the Apennines by easy necks, only 300 or 400 feet above the river. The first of these went from Casella by the col of Orero and S. Olcese to Torrazza on the western slope of the great ridge which joins Fort Sperone to the Apennines. Torrazza is almost at the top of the ridge, in which, at this point, there is a gap through which a level path leads to Pino on the eastern slope. This column pitched its camp on the slope which descends towards the Polcevera with its left at Torrazza and its right stretching towards Manassena. Another column ascended the Scrivia to Montoggio and crossed the Apennines at the Pass of Creto, from which there is a steep descent to the Bisagno. The armed peasants who were watching the routes fell back before the Austrians, whose troops on the 12th had come fairly close to the city. In the Polcevera Valley they had reached Bolzaneto. On the great ridge running north from Genoa the troops from Torrazza had seized the hill of Due Fratelli, little more than a mile from Fort Sperone, while the column that had descended into the Bisagno Valley had occupied the Madonna del Monte. On the 13th Mauriac with his

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handful of French troops attacked at all three points and recovered the Madonna del Monte, the Due Fratelli, and Bolzaneto. Three days were then spent in parley, Schulenburg demanding the surrender of the city, and the Senate replying that the city would defend itself to the last. On the 20th Schulenburg sent troops down the right bank of the Polcevera to meet his column from Ovada, which, thus reinforced, occupied Sestri Ponente.

Mauriac was diligently fortifying the hill of Due Fratelli, the Madonna del Monte, and the position on the hill of Belvedere. He also sent strong bodies of armed peasants to hold Torriglia and Scoffera, as well as the Bocca dei Ratti on one of the hills to the south of the Bisagno.

On the 1st of May the Genoese were greatly encouraged by the arrival of the Duke of Boufflers, sent to assist their defence by Louis XV, who thought that the presence of a great nobleman, Marshal of France, would convince them that he was in earnest in his endeavours to help them against Austria. Boufflers was at once placed in command and devoted himself heart and soul to his task. He inspected all the defences, and approved of Mauriac's dispositions. He reorganized the troops, gave an amnesty to deserters, of whom he recruited a great number, and entrenched a line from the Madonna del Monte to the sea. During the next few days the Austrians attacked the peasants in the upper valley of the Scrivia. On the 15th of May they were able to drive out the defenders of Voltri, to occupy that town and to capture the castle of Masone, which until then had been held by a Genoese garrison. On that day also, 8 Piedmontese battalions under General Della Rocca joined Schulenburg's force, and were posted along the lower Polcevera. The Austrians now had their own troops collected in three camps, the right at Cipriano, the centre between Manassena and Torrazza, and the left at Creto. Guns for the siege were landed by the British fleet at Sestri Ponente. The defence was strengthened by several further French and Spanish battalions which

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had been landed at Leghorn and Spezia and had marched thence to Genoa. On the 21st of May the Austrians began a great attack. They made demonstrations from the camp at Creto to divert attention from the main effort in the Polcevera Valley. Here they attacked and took Rivarolo and the Convent of Misericordia. Boufflers, who watched the action from the ramparts, directed a series of counter-attacks delivered on the 21st, but after four hours' heavy fighting the Austrians remained in possession of both points. Boufflers strengthened his defences at Belvedere, and the attack in this quarter was not continued. During the last week of May the Piedmontese troops, eventually increased to 12 battalions, took over the front along the lower Polcevera Valley, and the Austrians moved their troops from right to left, taking a large body from Misericordia to Montoggio in the Scrivia Valley. The next attack began on the 12th of June. One party drove away from Scoffera the force of peasants and supporting troops, which was then withdrawn to Porto Fino. From the camps at Torrazza and Creto 3 strong columns moved to the Bisagno Valley. The first marched by Pino to Olmo and then down the valley in order to take in rear the defences of the Madonna del Monte. This was stopped by 2 battalions placed by Boufflers at a point just north of the present Campo Santo. The other 2 columns crossed by the Rocca dei Ratti and Bavari into the Sturla Valley. The Genoese troops and French and Spanish outposts were driven back to the Madonna del Monte, and, while one party of Austrians pushed forward to the sea at Sturla, the rest established themselves in three bodies on Mount Quezzi, at Camaldoli, and at S. Tecla. The defenders held the Madonna del Monte and Albaro, where they were entrenched. Schulenburg then had his siege-guns brought by British men-of-war from Sestri Ponente and landed at Sturla, and began the bombardment of the works at Albaro; but as the Genoese were not short of guns, and as Boufflers by this time could dispose of 11 French and 7 Spanish battalions, the defenders awaited the expected assault without too much alarm.

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During the last week in May, when Boufflers had completed his dispositions for defence, he fell ill of small-pox, and had to abandon the command. On the 2nd of July he died.

Before the threatened attack could be delivered Schulenburg was compelled by the course of events in the western theatre of war first to postpone and then to abandon the enterprise.

iii. *Belle-Isle occupies the county of Nice. Plan for the Invasion of Piedmont*

THE object of the defenders of a fortress is to gain time; their fate depends upon the action of the armies in the field. In March and April 1747, while Belle-Isle's army was resting in its winter quarters, the plan of the coming campaign was carefully considered in particular by Bourcet, who spent the period of inaction at Grenoble, where he wrote two papers expressing views which commended themselves to Belle-Isle. The object proposed was the relief of Genoa.

As the fortresses along the Riviera were now held by the enemy, the French generals thought it impracticable to move by that route to the relief of the besieged city. They thought that the best course, indeed the only one open to them, was to invade Piedmont through the Alps with an army strong enough to oblige Charles Emmanuel to withdraw troops from Genoa to meet the attack and even to require Austrian reinforcements. The remaining Austrian forces would then not be strong enough to besiege and take Genoa if its garrison were strengthened by French and Spanish regular troops.

Bourcet's memoir *On the Means of Entering into Italy by the county of Nice, along the Sea, and by the Riviera of Genoa*, illuminates the whole war.

'The success of this plan in 1745 had the following causes:

(1) During the winter of 1744–5 the Spaniards had occupied all the towns and villages along the coast as far as Albenga.

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(2) They had accumulated supplies sufficient for their march; they had either occupied, or were ready to anticipate the enemy in occupying the posts along the mountain ridge in case the enemy should attempt to oppose their march.

(3) As we were allied with the Genoese who held Ventimiglia, Finale, and Savona, we were assured of these positions, and could there land guns, ammunition, and provisions.

(4) At that time the Queen of Hungary's army was confronting that of de Gages on the borders of the Papal States, and the King of Sardinia did not venture to take the field with his own forces alone, and had not sufficient confidence to defend the entrances into his territory.'

Bourcet proceeds to review in turn the various difficulties which, in the conditions of 1747, he foresees.

The first is that you cannot move along the coast except by divisions of 4,000 or 5,000 men following one another with intervals of two days, for the route is a defile along which men can hardly go two abreast; you cannot assemble large bodies of troops except at Albenga, Oneglia, or Finale, and from these places the troops assembled can move only one division at a time.

The King of Sardinia, on the other hand, can collect his army about Ormea, for he will be in no doubt about the direction of our march. From this point he can come down upon any of our places of assembly or upon the interval between two of them, so that he can either stop us, separate our divisions, or fall upon the one which he thinks weakest. The only means of parrying this kind of attack is by a chain of posts at such points as Castillon, Piena, Dolceacqua, Pigna, La Pieve, &c., posts which the enemy can always force, and which it would not be easy to withdraw to the rear-guard.

The second difficulty is the length of the communications to be protected.

We should be obliged to leave troops in the county of Nice to resist an attack by the Col di Tenda.

We should have to take Finale and Savona, and possibly Ceva, yet there is no means of transporting the artillery needed for a siege, nor can we, in the presence of the British fleet, count upon moving supplies by sea, and we have not mules enough to carry provisions by road

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We found it hard enough to supply ourselves even when we had the assistance of the Genoese.

For all these reasons Bourcet thinks that the plan which was carried out in 1745 is impossible in 1747.

Bourcet's other paper is a plan of operations by the valleys of Susa and of Pragelas.

Usseaux in the valley of Pragelas was Bourcet's birthplace, and he knew every inch of the ground with which this plan is concerned. His object was to besiege and capture the fortress of Exilles, after which he proposed to blockade the fortress of La Brunette, and then to besiege the fortress of Fenestrelle.

The army was to be assembled at Briançon and thence to move to a camp on the mountain chain which separates the valley of Susa from that of Pragelas. This camp would have its right at Le Duc and its left at Jouvenceaux. From here it was to move forward along the ridge by Cotteplane to the plateau of the Assietta, whence it would send a party to destroy the bridge between Exilles and Chiomonte, thus cutting off the communication of Exilles, which would be invested on the left bank of the Dora by troops sent through Salbertrand. Exilles must be battered down by artillery; the main body would then push along the ridge from the Assietta to the Colle delle Finestre and prepare for the siege of Fenestrelle in a second campaign.

Exilles destroyed, the road to Turin was open, provided that a party of troops was placed to observe the fortress of La Brunette.

An attack on Fenestrelle was not a necessary preliminary to a march on Turin: Charles Emmanuel must defend it to the last extremity; for, once it was taken by the French, Piedmont would always be at their mercy.

Convinced of the soundness of Bourcet's ideas, Belle-Isle in May returned to the army. On the way he met La Mina at Bagnols,[1] and it was agreed between the two generals that the main body of both armies should invade

[1] Apparently Bagnols near Nimes.

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the county of Nice, and that a large force should be placed in Dauphiné for an attack on Exilles.

The Spanish Court had promised that its troops, reinforced to 33 battalions and 40 squadrons, should be ready to open the campaign on the 1st of April.

On the 23rd of May Belle-Isle reached Cannes, accompanied by his son the Comte de Gisors, a boy of fifteen, and by a large staff.

The first enterprise was the recapture of the Iles de Lérins, for which the Chevalier de Belle-Isle had made all the arrangements in April. The presence of Admiral Byng's fleet had necessarily prevented the attempt. On the 24th, however, a storm obliged Byng to take shelter in the harbour of Villefranche. Next morning the sea was calm, and some 30 companies of infantry escorted by 2 barques of 18 and 14 guns and a flotilla of galleys and other small craft set out in boats, half from the Cap d'Antibes for the east end, and half from the Cap de la Croisette for the west end of the Isle of Ste Marguerite. They landed unopposed on that island while the ships bombarded the small fort of the island of S. Honorat. The smaller island surrendered in the evening, and the island of Ste Marguerite next morning, before the arrival of Byng, who came up too late to save it.

Belle-Isle then moved his head-quarters to Cagnes, and distributed his troops ready for the passage of the Var, 30 battalions at St. Laurent, 9 at Carros, and 9 at Le Broc. He had sent into Dauphiné 12 battalions to the camp at Tournoux, 5 to Guillestre, and 6 to Briançon.

On the 31st La Mina arrived at Cagnes with 2 Spanish battalions, the rest of the Spanish army being *en route* from Languedoc.

In the county of Nice Leutrum had 27 battalions, most of them at La Turbie, 5 at Nice, and 3 at Aspremont, with outposts along the Var. That river was swollen by recent rains and Leutrum supposed that it could not be crossed. He had no intention of attempting to defend the county against a force double his own, and had given detailed instructions for the retreat in case of attack by

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superior forces. Early on the 3rd of June the French army forded the Var in 5 columns between Le Broc and the sea, losing 9 men drowned.

The Piedmontese fell back according to orders, the troops from Nice to La Turbie and those from Aspremont to Châteauneuf. By evening Belle-Isle's bridges over the Var were completed, his advance-guard was on the Mont Gros, his main body at S. Pons and Cimiez, and the two left columns united at Aspremont. In the evening La Mina joined Belle-Isle at Nice, surprised at the speedy success of an operation in which only two Spanish battalions had taken part. Next day Leutrum withdrew from La Turbie and spread his troops on the line Col de Braus, Castillon, Castellar, Sainte-Agnès, and Menton, with his advance-guard at Gorbio. The French columns moved forward to Contes, Berre, l'Escarène, and Luceram. The main body on the hills between Villefranche and the Paillon covered the siege of Fort Mont Alban and the citadel of Villefranche, which surrendered, the first on the 5th, the second on the 11th. On the 12th Belle-Isle redistributed his troops with a view to a fresh advance and the recapture of Ventimiglia. Five columns moved on the 14th to Menton, Castellar, Castillon, Olivetta, and Sospel, while Leutrum fell back placing his right at Piena, and the rest of his troops spread out in the hills between that place and Borgomaro. He saw that his force was too small to defend Ventimiglia, and was evidently preparing to operate against the flank of an advance by the Riviera towards Genoa.

On the 20th Belle-Isle sent forward troops to Bordighera and Campo Rosso in the valley of the Nervia, with an advance-guard at San Remo. He also sent a detachment to Lantosque. Leutrum disposed his troops along the road between Oneglia and Ormea putting his head-quarters at Villa Guardia between Oneglia and Borgomaro.

While the preparations for the siege of Ventimiglia were in progress—the guns were landed at Menton and dragged up to Castel d'Appio—3 brigades were sent to Lantosque *en route* for Dauphiné. On the 26th the bom

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bardment of Ventimiglia began and its garrison of 300 men surrendered on the 30th.

During the siege of Ventimiglia Belle-Isle discovered that La Mina absolutely disagreed with his view of the further operations. La Mina wanted the whole army to march along the Riviera to the relief of Genoa, which all parties were agreed was the main purpose of the campaign, but Belle-Isle, as has been seen, held this route to be impracticable and had made preparations for an advance from Briançon by the valley of the Dora Riparia against Susa and Turin.

The dispute was as usual referred to the two courts.

The views of Bourcet, which were shared by Belle-Isle, have already been explained, and apart from the military reason Belle-Isle had a personal motive for preferring the attack from Dauphiné. He was anxious to give his brother the Chevalier the opportunity of some marked success in an independent command. He proposed to entrust to him the attack on the position of the Assietta, hoping that by a brilliant victory he would gain the bâton of a marshal of France. He could not believe that La Mina was sincere either in the desire to help the Genoese, for few Spanish troops had been sent to that city, or in his intention to carry out the march by the Riviera. This opinion of La Mina Belle-Isle expressed in his private letters, though he took care to be as polite and friendly as possible in his personal intercourse with the Spanish general. He pointed out to La Mina that the manœuvre from Briançon was of the nature of a surprise; that the march along the Riviera would in any case be slow, and that there would be time for the troops from Dauphiné to return to Nice and to form the rear-guard of the army long before its advance-guard could be anywhere near Genoa. Thereupon La Mina agreed to the dispatch of 18 French and 2 Spanish battalions to Dauphiné. These were divided into 4 brigades, and set out from Lantosque at intervals of one or two days through the hills to Isola in the valley of the Tinée, which was followed to S. Dalmas, thence by the Col de Pourriac to Argentera,

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and then by Larche to Jausiers, where the first columns arrived on the 8th and 9th and the last two on the 10th and 12th of July. From Jausiers the march was continued by Barcelonnette and Savines to Guillestre.

The troops had been sent off on the assumption that Belle-Isle's plan would have the approval of the French King. The French Court was at this time in Flanders, and the King had considered the proposals of the French and Spanish generals after discussing them with d'Argenson, the Minister of War, and with Puysieulx, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the Marshal de Noailles, and the Duke d'Huescar, the Spanish Ambassador. The King's reply, written on the 30th of June at Louvain, reached Belle-Isle at Nice on the 9th of July.

The King wrote:

'My cousin, if I considered only the preservation of my troops, or if I had no other object than to carry on in Italy an offensive war such as could, in time, procure an establishment for the Infant Don Philip, my son-in-law, I should enter into the views which you put before me of acting after the capture of Ventimiglia by way of the diversion in Piedmont; I feel all its wisdom and solidity, and I should agree with you that it is the most in accordance with the rules of war and the certainty of our operations. But more pressing motives compel me to pass over these considerations and to order you to concur in the plan which M. de La Mina suggests to you of marching directly, by the shortest way, to Genoa, immediately after the capture of the castle of Ventimiglia; the pressing situation of that Republic, my Ally; its need of prompt and decisive succour, the opinion widespread, especially among the Genoese, that their safety depends on the arrival of our troops, of whom the march alone may frighten the besiegers and compel them to withdraw; the fact that the Spaniards and their general think this enterprise possible; the eternal self-reproach that I should feel if that Republic, having to succumb, should impute its ruin to the lack of the help I could have given it, however uncertain its success may be; and lastly my engagements with Spain, of which you know as I do, all the importance and all the extent. I therefore count on your entering with me into the indispensable reasons which determine my choice, that you will serve me in it with all the zeal, devotion, and activity of which you have given me so many proofs, that you will overcome all the obstacles which, on any other occasion, would stop you and would stop me. Be sure that on my part I shall not impute to you any of the events,

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whatever they may be, which might result from the execution of the orders which I am giving you, and that I shall be grateful to you for your efforts to bring them to a happy issue.'

This letter from Louis was accompanied by a letter from the Comte d'Argenson, Minister of War, in which, after urging Belle-Isle to make the King's decision his own, the Minister says:

'This will, however, not prevent you from continuing to carry out your plan on the side of Piedmont, so far as is practicable with the forces which you have already collected in Dauphiné for the purpose, seeing that the mere demonstration made by this diversion may always be useful by preventing the King of Sardinia from increasing the forces which he is lending to the Queen of Hungary against the Genoese, if it does not compel him to withdraw them.'

The King's decision placed Belle-Isle in the most difficult and delicate situation in which a general can find himself.

All the leading French statesmen and generals sympathized with Belle-Isle, though it seems to have been impossible for any of them to imagine a general taking the course which seemed right to Napoleon,[1] of resigning his command rather than carry out an order which he regarded as a military mistake.

The Marshal de Noailles wrote to Belle-Isle:

'I have seen in the course of my life how greatly political interests embarrass military operations, and how often they compel the abandonment of plans most in accord with the principles of war for others which conform to them less.'

But Noailles advised Belle-Isle to do as he was told. Puysieulx, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Vauréal, the French Ambassador at Madrid, to say that he had done his best to bring the Spaniards to reason, but had completely failed.

'Our situation is such, that if M. de Belle-Isle does not carry out the plan of going by the coast of Genoa, we shall have an irreparable breach with Spain, we shall not enter into Italy at all, and we shall leave Genoa and Naples exposed; and if, on the other hand, M. de Belle-Isle, in obedience to the King's

[1] See p. 93.

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orders, defers to M. de La Mina's opinions, the consequence will perhaps be the loss of the King's army, and in that case I am bound to admit that our complaisance was going a little too far.'

Marshal Belle-Isle, after reading d'Argenson's letter, considered that he was justified in carrying out his plan for the attack on Exilles, provided that he sent to Dauphiné no more troops than were already there or on the march thither, and that he could obtain La Mina's consent.

His brother, the Chevalier, had already started for Dauphiné to take over the command. The Marshal therefore wrote to the Chevalier on the 9th telling him what the King's orders were, what d'Argenson had written, and that he was trying to persuade La Mina to agree to the continuation of the enterprise. The Chevalier received this letter at Tournoux on the 10th, and replied that he would wait to hear further. It was not till the evening of the 11th that Belle-Isle was able to extract from La Mina a note in which he said that, all things considered, 'I think that we must continue things as they are'.

That evening, therefore, Belle-Isle wrote to his brother to 'go forward and follow our plan with all the vigour and speed that you can'. This letter reached the Chevalier on the 14th at Guillestre. Already on the 10th at Tournoux he had received from d'Arnault, commanding the troops at Briançon, a series of reports on the movements of Piedmontese troops in the region of his proposed attack. He learned that at the end of June there was a Piedmontese battalion at S. Columbano, Thullie, and the Quattro-Denti, 2 battalions at Susa, and only peasants on the ridge of the Assietta; that there were 6 battalions at Fenestrelle, but that a week later several battalions had gone up to the Assietta; numerous peasants were at work fortifying the ridge, and a chain of signals had been established to report the approach of the French.

On the 12th the Chevalier wrote to his brother to say that he had been working at his plans with Villemur, d'Arnault, Monteynard, Bourcet, and Le Blanc; that they could not count on attacking the Colle delle Finestre,

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because there was much work going on to make entrenchments supported by stones without mortar at the Col d'Arguel (Colle dell' Assietta) and also at the Colle Cotte Plane, and that between these two points there were 7 battalions.

'M. d'Arnault asserts that we must march with extreme diligence, and that we must count at least 15 days from starting from Briançon until our guns can be ready to fire on Exilles; this period, added to 8 days for the siege, would give the Piedmontese more leisure than they require to come up in whatever force they think proper. This prospect is the more disagreeable as we do not know the day when we can start, for after your last letter [Belle-Isle's letter of the 9th] I have decided to stay here to-morrow, when I expect to receive your final answer.'

On the 13th the Chevalier wrote out all his dispositions for the attack. The troops were to start on the 14th from where they were, and to be on the 18th in the positions from which the attack was to be delivered.

iv. *The Assietta*

THE advance through the county of Nice of Belle-Isle's army far outnumbering the Austrians and Sardinians under Leutrum gave Charles Emmanuel a hard nut to crack. Would Belle-Isle push along the Riviera to relieve Genoa? Leutrum unless reinforced could not stop him, and the only reinforcement to be had must come from Schulenburg's army, which would then be too weak to continue the siege. There was, however, no need of a precipitate decision, as Leutrum with the aid of the fortresses would certainly be able greatly to delay Belle-Isle's advance.

Schulenburg, the Austrian general entrusted with the siege of Genoa, found that enterprise more difficult than he had expected, and on learning that Belle-Isle had driven Leutrum out of the county of Nice was afraid that the Franco-Spanish army would be too strong for Leutrum's forces and might continue its advance along the Riviera before he should have been able to compel Genoa to

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surrender. At a council of war held at his head-quarters on June 20, he and all his generals agreed that it would be prudent to raise the siege and to march to Leutrum's assistance. Schulenburg had gone so far towards giving effect to this decision as to send back his siege-guns by sea from Sturla on the east of the town to Sestri Ponente when a letter from Charles Emmanuel reassured him. Charles Emmanuel pointed out that before Belle-Isle could reach Genoa he would have to take in succession the forts of Ventimiglia, Oneglia, Finale, and Savona. That for each of the sieges he would require heavy guns which it would cost him much time and trouble to bring up. There was therefore no need to raise the siege. Thereupon Schulenburg brought back his guns from Sestri Ponente and resumed his operations.[1]

Charles Emmanuel was always kept informed by his well-organized intelligence service, and when, before the siege of Ventimiglia, a strong French column marched off from the county of Nice towards Dauphiné he at once divined that Belle-Isle was about to divide his army, and with a part of it to repeat the attempt of 1744 against one of the Alpine passes. The accumulation of supplies at Briançon and Mont Dauphin and the collection of many guns at Mont Dauphin did not reveal the direction of the coming attack, as this was the central point behind all the passes from the Stura to Mont Genèvre. Charles Emmanuel therefore took his precautions in all the passes. He had few troops available, for 16 of his battalions were with Leutrum, 12 under Della Rocca with Schulenburg at Genoa, and the rest forming garrisons at Modena, Piacenza, Savona, and Finale as well as on the Alpine frontier at Demonte, Cuneo, Fenestrelle, Susa, and Exilles. The works at Demonte had been restored and those of Cuneo improved since 1744. The most dangerous direction of attack would be from the Mont Genèvre, as that was the region most remote from such reinforcements as could come from the armies on the coast. Moreover, a French army coming from the Mont Genèvre might turn

[1] Arneth, *Maria Theresia's erste Regierungs-Jahre*, iii, pp. 294–5.

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both Fenestrelle and Exilles by moving along the ridge between them known as the Assietta, which though high and steep-sided has a gentle ascent from the west end and admits of movement along its crest. The best defence both of Exilles and of Fenestrelle consisted in posting on this ridge a force which if sheltered by field works could resist attack, and which so long as it maintained its position threatened the flank of an army advancing down either valley.

As soon as he heard of the movement of French troops towards Dauphiné, Charles Emmanuel had plans made for the fortification of the Assietta, and on June 29 ordered Count Bricherasio to take charge of its defence. He placed at his disposal 4 Piedmontese and 5 Swiss battalions, which were assembled at points within two days' march of Fenestrelle, while a tenth was kept ready at Turin to be sent to him if needed.

Charles Emmanuel induced Browne, now Commander-in-Chief of the Austrian forces in Italy, to send to Pinerolo under Count Colloredo 4 battalions taken from the garrisons in Lombardy. These reached Pinerolo on July 13.

On the 30th of June Charles Emmanuel wrote to Della Rocca to march from Genoa with his 12 battalions to Savona, where he was to leave 2 of them, and with the other 10 to march on to join the right wing of Leutrum's army. This order reached Della Rocca on July 2, whereupon Schulenburg again began to remove his artillery and on the night of July 5–6 retreated to Torrazza. Della Rocca remained in his position to cover this retreat and on the 7th marched off to Savona, and thence with 5 battalions to the Col del Pizzo, and with 5 to the Passo di Carpasio. Schulenburg remained at Torrazza till the 21st, when he continued his retreat by the Bocchetta towards Novi.

Charles Emmanuel arranged with Browne that as soon as the troops were withdrawn from the siege of Genoa the main body of the Austrian army should march into Piedmont to his assistance, leaving at Novi under Nadasti

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a force sufficient to prevent any Genoese incursion into Piedmontese territory. Thus Belle-Isle's threat of an invasion of Piedmont from Dauphiné had, as he expected, relieved Genoa. The immediate danger was removed, though the retention of Nadasti's force to the north of the Bocchetta showed that the Austrians contemplated a renewal of the siege and required the defenders of Genoa to continue their vigilance and their preparations.

On the 14th reports reached Turin from Mont Dauphin and Briançon which left no doubt as to the direction of the French advance. Bricherasio thereupon brought up Colloredo's Austrian battalions, and the battalion from Turin was sent to Susa. On the evening of July 18 Bricherasio had 3 battalions posted at points between his entrenchments and Fenestrelle. In the entrenchment were posted 9 battalions (4 Austrian, 3 Swiss, and 2 Piedmontese). One Swiss battalion was posted at the Alp d'Arguel on the north of the ridge, and one Piedmontese battalion was at Susa.

On the 14th also Charles Emmanuel sent orders to Della Rocca to march with his 10 battalions from the Col del Pizzo and the Passo di Carpasio to Pinerolo. At the same time he ordered up towards Pinerolo 2 battalions from Cuneo and Borgo San Dalmazzo. None of these troops reached Chisone valley till the 20th.

Marshal Belle-Isle's hope that his brother's expedition would take Charles Emmanuel by surprise was not to be fulfilled. The time wasted in sending to Flanders for the orders of Louis XV had made surprise impossible. The Chevalier fully understood that preparations had been made to receive him, and that the enterprise would prove more difficult than had been expected.

The orders written by him at Guillestre on the 13th divided his force into 3 columns. The right, of 14 battalions under Villemur, the centre, which the Chevalier was to accompany, of 15 battalions under De Mailly, with 6 four-pounders and 3 mountain-guns. Its advance-guard under d'Arnault was formed of 6 of the battalions, these being at Briançon, and 5 squadrons of dragoons. The left column under d'Escars was formed of 6 companies of

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grenadiers and 6 picquets of some 50 men each, and assembled at Briançon on the 14th.

On the 15th d'Escars was to start from Briançon and march by Plampinet and the Col de l'Echelle to Bardonecchia. There he was to be joined by 2 Spanish battalions coming from Modane by the Col de la Roue.

On the 14th Villemur was to march from Guillestre to Arvieux, and Mailly from Guillestre to La Bessée, on the 15th Villemur to Cervières, sending his advance-guard to Le Bourget, and Mailly through Briançon to La Vachette, while d'Arnault was to go from Briançon to Cesana. On the 16th Villemur was to march over the Col Bousson to Rollières, his advance-guard to Champlas du Col; d'Arnault was to go from Cesana to Oulx and send on a party to seize the Pont Ventoux, while Mailly was to march from La Vachette to Cesana. On this day d'Escars was to go from Bardonecchia to Rochemolles, after which he was to march by the Ambin or the Mont Saguret to the Quattro-Denti and the Capella Bianca, which he was to reach on the 18th, provided that the Pont Ventoux was in order. On the 17th Villemur from Champlas to Chezal and Luc, with his advance-guard on the Pietre del Aigle, and a party at Traverses. This day Mailly to march from Cesana to Oulx, and d'Arnault to divide his advance-guard between Pont Ventoux, Sauze d'Oulx, and Jouvenceaux. On the 18th Villemur's advance-guard and that of d'Arnault were to unite on the Colle di Bourget and to move forward as far as the Colle Cotte Plane.

These movements were carried out precisely as ordered, except that d'Escars, on reaching the head of the ravine of Valfroide, found the snow on the peaks and passes so heavy that it was impossible to continue his proposed march, and he therefore marched back to Bardonecchia, and thence to Oulx, where he arrived on the 18th. The Pont Ventoux had been broken down but was restored by d'Arnault's advance-guard on the 16th. Villemur, during his advance, had left parties at Thures and Sauze di Cesana to guard against flank attacks from the Colle di Turras or from Argentiera.

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On the morning of the 17th, Belle-Isle, accompanied by d'Arnault, rode up to the Colle di Bourget to reconnoitre. His escort pushed back the Piedmontese outposts, and he went as far as the Colle Cotte Plane, but the mist was so thick that it was impossible to see more than twenty yards. The mist turned into rain, snow, and hail. Belle-Isle waited till one o'clock, but could still see nothing, and he then rode back to Oulx. During the day Villemur sent him word that according to the best information he could obtain, the enemy had only 7 battalions in the works on the ridge. Belle-Isle inferred that he had succeeded in reaching the ground before Charles Emmanuel had been able to bring up reinforcements, and had thus obtained the hoped-for surprise. He issued his orders for the right and centre columns to move on the 18th into the position on the ridge from which on the 19th he would attack the entrenchments, and for d'Escars on that day to march by the Pont Ventoux to Salbertrand.

The ridge of the Assietta is more than 8,000 feet above the sea. Its southern side is a drop of 3,000 feet to the bed of the Chisone, not quite two miles distant. The northern slope falls 5,300 feet in two miles to the Dora Riparia.

The Piedmontese defences consisted of a parapet from seven to eight feet high, made of fascines (bundles of sticks) in layers and faced with rough stones. This parapet lined the top of the ridge on each side for a distance of a mile and a quarter from the Testa del Assietta to the Gran Serin. About midway it enclosed the Colle del Assietta, where the ridge forms a plateau a few hundred yards square.

The parapet ran some hundred yards north and south along the west face of this plateau, in which the Piedmontese battalions were encamped. The plateau was called the redoubt of the Assietta. The wall at the extreme west end of the whole work was called the Butta del Assietta; that at the extreme eastern end the Redoubt of the Serin.

Belle-Isle's orders were for the two advance-guards,

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united at Cotte Plane, to attack the western end of the works at the Butta del Assietta. Mailly's column was to go from Sauze d'Oulx to the Margherie del Seu, and thence to attack the western face of the square, while Villemur was to march by Grand Puy to attack the Gran Serin.

During the night Mailly's column bivouacked at Seu, and those of d'Arnault and Villemur, at Cotte Plane. On the morning of the 19th, while Villemur marched off towards the Gran Serin, the columns of d'Arnault and Mailly moved towards the points which they were to attack, and halted out of gunshot until Belle-Isle should give the signal for the assault, which was to be as soon as Villemur was within striking distance of his objective.

The most trustworthy account of the action is the report written on the plateau at the Assietta a day or two after the battle, by the Comte de Priocca, Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the Casale battalion of the Piedmontese army.

'On the evening of the 18th the disposition of our troops was settled and each battalion reconnoitred the ground assigned to it, and the portion of the entrenchments which it was to occupy. On the 19th two hours before daylight our troops stood to arms, but as no enemy was visible the battalions were sent back to their camps, leaving guards at their posts and scouts out to prevent surprise. About 10 o'clock we were warned of the enemy's approach, which was made in the most perfect order.

'A body of picked troops appeared on the heights about a mile from our trenches, from which they could be perfectly seen. Shortly afterwards we saw on the same heights a number of persons on horseback whom we supposed to be general officers. About 11 a pretty large body came down and advanced towards us, driving back our volunteers, whom we had in front, who fell back in good order to the heights nearer to our trenches. The said troops being posted, we saw several others come down to the same place, while other bodies just as large came forward along the mountain-side towards the little hamlet of Seu on the path from Salbertrand to the Assietta. All the enemy's brigades formed up under our eyes at cannon-range. As they knew that we had no guns they made at their ease their dispositions for attack. They had divided their army, of about 40 battalions (Belle-Isle had in fact 29 battalions) into 3 columns.

'One, on the right (Villemur), followed the valley, which is between the Little Serin or Mountain of Pourrière, in order to

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attack the Gran Serin. The other (Mailly), a little lower down towards the woods in front of our trenches on the right, and the third (d'Arnault) kept along the crest of the ridge, which leads to the redoubt (Butta) guarded by the Grenadiers of the guards and of Casale.

'As soon as these two last bodies, which had a very short distance to come to us, were within carbine-range of our trenches, they sat down quietly on their arms in order to give time to their right-hand column to make the great tour required to bring it to the foot of the Col di Serin; for it had to go right round the Col and Plateau of the Assietta.

'They kept this attitude from noon to half-past four. However, they began to salute us with their artillery, which they placed on a mound to the left of our trenches (apparently the Testa di Mottas).

'At first they had only four guns, but later on they brought the number up to seven. At half-past four their left column began to move, and dividing itself into two bodies against the trenches held by the battalions of Forgatsch and Mayer (west face of the plateau), without observing that they were exposing themselves to a double fire, that from the front they were attacking, and that from their right flank from the communication (between the plateau and the Butta) guarded by the regiment of Traun. We let them come to close range, after which we opened from these two places a fire so violent that they were never able to come nearer, in spite of all the measures taken by the general and other officers conducting them, who brought them to the charge with a courage and presence of mind which astonished the most intrepid spectators, and, as the officers were not disconcerted, the soldiers were not discouraged, and incessantly made new efforts to come near us; only death and wounds kept them away. But at last, seeing it was impossible for them to penetrate in this place, they retired a little way, and forming up anew in good order, they detached a body, which, going down by the wood, pushed forward, passing round our right through the interval between the entrenchments of the Assietta and those of Riobacon (Gr. Ruine). As this ground was not entrenched it was not hard for them to penetrate there, and our picquets, finding themselves cut off by this movement, very prudently retired to Alp d'Arguel, where the battalion of Chablais, come up this day (from Turin), had replaced that of Roy, which Count Bricherasio had sent up with great urgency to the Col di Serin to reinforce there the two battalions of Kalbermatten, which alone guarded these important entrenchments, on the preservation of which depended, not only that of the others, but also that of all the King's troops, who had no secure retreat except that way.

'But it was pretty late when these picquets withdrew in the manner described.

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'The centre column approached the redoubt of the grenadiers (the Butta) favoured by the crest which leads to it, and, protected by the kind of shelter which it offers, divided itself into two bodies which, when within pistol-range of the redoubt, both came at a run up to the two salient angles of the work.

'Never has been seen the like of the intrepidity of the enemy's chiefs and the hardihood revealed by his soldiers in this attack. Messieurs les généraux were at the head. Entire ranks of officers followed them, and showed the soldiers the path of victory or of death.

'In spite of the fire from the front and flanks of the redoubt, and that of our volunteers from a crest of the mountain parallel to the redoubt, where General Alciati had posted the grenadier company of Mayer, and in spite of the fall of an infinite number of dead and wounded, the generals, officers and soldiers did not slacken their ardour.

'They advanced boldly on both sides to such a point that some began to pull out the fascines with their hands, and others to dig away the foundations with their tools. Our grenadiers did wonders, and encouraged by the presence of Messieurs le Chevalier Alciati and Comtes Colloredo and Martinengo, as well as by the example of their brave officers, they never ceased shooting and making the enemy pay the price of blood and of life for every inch of ground which they gained towards us.

'A good number of the enemy plastered themselves so close up against the redoubt that they could not be reached by musket shots. The grenadiers fired at them with one hand over the parapet, hurled at them great stones by which they were very much put out, and even got up on to the parapet to plunge their bayonets into their skulls. In spite of the fire of their artillery and their muskets, which shot continually at everything that showed itself above the redoubt, the volunteers and grenadiers of Mayer and the Old Guards had to fall back from the post already mentioned, parallel to the redoubt, but even this did not cause the slightest variation.

'M. le Chevalier de Belle-Isle, commanding the enemy's army, being at the battery, and seeing that the attack on the redoubt had not the good issue which he had hoped, came thither himself to give his orders and encourage the soldiers. He took a flag and planted it with his own hand on the slope which the assailants had begun to make at the re-entering angle of the redoubt, but of what avail is so much bravery against the designs of Providence, which had marked down for this day the loss of this valiant Captain and the upsetting of his bold plans? Two musket shots laid him low among the crowd of dead. M. d'Arnault Lt.-General, five colonels and a very large number of officers of distinction and merit met with the same fate. Yet those who remained did not cease to give new proofs of courage. One ill-fated hero climbed on to the parapet of the

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redoubt, but was bayoneted by a Grenadier corporal of the Casale regiment.

'Would it be believed that after these advantages we found ourselves, towards seven o'clock, on the point of having to abandon a post which had cost our enemies so many illustrious lives? We began to fall short of powder and hardly any of our muskets were fit to fire. The grenadiers continued to fight, but mostly with stones instead of bullets.

'Moreover, a new and still more dangerous attack distracted the attention of our generals and very nearly induced them to give up this ground, for which both sides had so bravely contended, in order to secure the preservation of the other.

'M. de Villemur, Lt.-General, at the head of twelve battalions and as many companies of grenadiers, having mounted, after a long detour, to the Col di Serin by the steep, almost inaccessible mountain-side, appeared before the entrenchments guarded by the battalions of Kalbermatten and Roy with a vivacity equal to that of the other attacks. Three times they were repulsed, and three times they returned to the charge with the same ardour. As this post completely commanded that of the Assietta, all the resistance we had made at the latter point became useless if the former were forced. M. le Comte de Bricherasio came himself to this point after charging M. le Comte de Martinengo to remain at the centre, and there to pay attention to the movements which the enemy might make by the ravine which runs down to the Puy on one side and to Fenestrelle on the other.

'M. le Chevalier Alciati, leaving the Comte de S. Sebastien in command at the redoubt, went to the communication which rises from the Assietta to the Col di Serin, taking with him, as reinforcements, the picquets of Casale, Mayer, and Hagenbach, which were not so usefully employed elsewhere.

'However, the three Swiss battalions at Serin behaved with their usual intrepidity, and the enemy found themselves obliged to retire before daylight failed them. This was a movement very dangerous for them, and their total defeat would have been the inevitable consequence if the lack of ammunition had not compelled M. le Comte de Bricherasio firmly to refuse to listen to the battalion commanders, who begged him to allow them to make a sortie, as they were sure of crushing the enemy because of the advantage of the ground. Only a few grenadiers of Kalbermatten and of Roy went out from the entrenchments without doing much hurt to the enemy, who, in spite of their defeat, withdrew with all the precautions possible in such a case.

'At last the setting sun left us victorious at all points. The brave Count of St. Sebastien, aided by the reinforcements sent to him by M. le général Comte de Colloredo, of the grenadier companies of Mayer and Forgatsch, and a picquet of the guards, commanded by the Marquis du Bernez, steadfastly held the redoubt, where he worthily earned the esteem of all the officers

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fighting under his orders, and the praises of which they are still full.

'The enemy finally retired on all sides.'

The casualties on the side of the Piedmontese and Austrians were 219, among whom were 3 captains killed and 6 other officers wounded. The French had 94 officers killed, 337 wounded, and 4,553 of the rank and file killed and wounded. This was a quarter of the whole French force engaged.

In the evening the 3 defeated columns retreated to the positions from which they had set out for the attack, and stood to arms till dawn, when they retired, the right columns to Chezal and Le Duc, the left and centre to Sauze d'Oulx, with a rear-guard at the Col di Bourget.

On the 22nd Villemur, the senior surviving general, withdrew the whole force across the frontier to Mont Genèvre, Le Bourget, and Cervières.

The plan of campaign approved by the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, upon which the Chevalier's enterprise was based, sketched by Bourcet in March at Grenoble, had been worked out in detail by the same officer in a memorandum for the Chevalier, dated July 1.

It seems strange that Bourcet did not accompany the Chevalier on the expedition. The reason probably was that the Marshal himself could not dispense with his topographical knowledge, his judgement, and his experience.

Once the Chevalier had left Nice the Marshal felt uneasy about the issue of an undertaking in which he had persisted in spite of the King's instructions, and on which he was risking his own and his brother's reputation. Bourcet laid great stress on turning the position of the Assietta, and had gone minutely into the means by which this was to be done, as well as the precautions to be taken. He had indicated every point of military importance in the region, had discussed every possible movement of the enemy, and the means of meeting it. According to his plan the right column was to go to Balbutet, and thence to send parties to the Colle delle Finestre, and to a position

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which commanded the route between that point and Fenestrelle. The left column was to establish itself at the Alp d'Arguel. His first principle of mountain warfare was that it is dangerous to attack in front a position in the mountains when it can be turned.

The Marshal seems to have been afraid that his brother would be too impetuous. He wrote to the Chevalier on the 17th to remind him of Bourcet's view that the enemy's position could be turned, that they would never stay until their retreat was cut off, and that the decisive point was the Colle delle Finestre. On the 18th he wrote again enclosing a fresh paper from Bourcet in which once more the necessity of gaining the Colle delle Finestre was urged, and saying, 'Everything well weighed and considered, you must be more than morally certain of success, or not make the attempt.' Unfortunately neither of these letters reached the Chevalier.

More than one of the Chevalier's generals protested beforehand against the attack in the conditions in which it was made. Mailly asked to be allowed to deliver his assault from the Alp d'Arguel against the north face of the works, but this proposal was rejected. It was also thought that the assault should have been put off till dawn on the 20th, to give time for Villemur's column to make its long march, and to prepare fascines and scaling-ladders, without which it proved impossible to climb the parapet. The Chevalier himself wrote to the Marshal on the 16th that the affair was beginning to be very serious, giving a rough description of the entrenchments in which he then supposed that there were 18 battalions.

On the 17th he wrote again that he was afraid that the column of d'Escars would be stopped by the snow, and was very much annoyed that in his reconnaissance that morning he had seen practically nothing.

It seems probable that he was induced to attack on the 19th, partly because having gone so far he was ashamed to go back, and partly because further delay would give time for Charles Emmanuel to bring up more troops.

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v. *Relief of Ventimiglia. Defence of Genoa. Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle*

In the period of suspense, after writing to the Chevalier to push on with his expedition, Belle-Isle had induced La Mina to agree to send 20 more battalions, 10 Spanish and 10 French, towards Barcelonnette, to be ready either to meet a counter-attack by the valley of the Stura or to exploit a success at Exilles.

The troops were posted along the upper Var ready to move on the word. Only 40 battalions were then left in the county of Nice, and this force was not thought adequate to hold the line of the Roja. It was decided to hold the line of the Paillon from Luceram by Escarène, Drap, and La Trinité to Nice. A small garrison had been left in the château of Ventimiglia, which was now isolated. Behind it there were outposts at Mentone, Castellar, and Castillon, with a support at Ste Agnès, and the outposts were connected with the main position by detachments at Eze, La Turbie, and Peille.

No very great importance was at this period attached to Ventimiglia, but it was thought vital to keep a firm hold on the harbour of Villefranche, from which Belle-Isle shipped reinforcements to Genoa whenever there seemed a chance of evading the British fleet.

It was on July 22 that the troops were withdrawn to these defensive positions, the forward posts previously occupied at Bordighera and San Remo being brought back.

The news of the failure at the Assietta and of the death of the Chevalier reached Belle-Isle on the 23rd. It was a great disaster, and Belle-Isle, deeply depressed, was afraid that the enemy would take the offensive. For the moment he could think only of plans of defence. He immediately recalled the 20 battalions from the Var, and gave orders for 20 battalions (18 French and 2 Spanish) from Dauphiné to be sent back as far as Castellane, where they would be equidistant from Barcelonnette and from Nice. La Mina, however, ordered the 2 Spanish battalions

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to go to Savoy. A few days later Belle-Isle proposed to La Mina that the Spanish project for an advance along the Riviera should be put into execution as soon as these troops should be available; but they would not be due at Castellane until August 13, and then still be several marches distant from Nice.

Of the troops left in Dauphiné 12 battalions were kept at Briançon under de Mailly, 4 at Guillestre, and 14 at or about Fort Tournoux. Mailly was ordered to fortify the region of Briançon and constructed defensive works on the passes leading from Cervières and Briançon to the valley of the Guil, and on the Infernet, east of Briançon, as well as along the ridge that separates the valley of the Clairée from that of the Guisane.

On August 8 Belle-Isle proposed to La Mina that with a view to encouraging the Genoese and also by way of preparation for an advance along the coast, they should besiege Saorgio and move forward beyond Ventimiglia to Oneglia or Albenga. La Mina, however, refused to budge.

At this time the French and Spanish armies were distributed as follows:

At Genoa there were 11 French and 7 Spanish battalions. Along the coast of Provence 10 battalions were posted at various points to resist possible landings from the British fleet. In the county of Nice there were 31 French and 31 Spanish battalions.

In Dauphiné there were 2 Spanish battalions on the march to Savoy, and 46 French, of which 18 were on the march to Castellane. The total French force, without counting the battalions in Provence, was 45,000 men, and the total Spanish force 16,000, making a grand total of 61,000, of whom about 8,000 were at Genoa.

After the abandonment of the siege of Genoa, Browne had marched the greater part of his army into Piedmont, where they were encamped in two bodies at Carmagnola and Casalgrasso. Including these forces, Charles Emmanuel now found himself at the head of an army slightly superior in number to the French.

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The Austrians had 87 battalions, much reduced during the siege of Genoa, so that they made up only 30,000 men. They had also 6,000 irregulars. Charles Emmanuel had 57 battalions in good condition, 27,000 men besides 10,000 Vaudois and other irregulars.

Thus the total of the combined army was 73,000 men. It had fewer regular troops than the army of Belle-Isle and La Mina, but for mountain warfare its irregulars were good soldiers, and their numbers gave Charles Emmanuel a slight advantage.

It was only under pressure from the British Government that Maria Theresa and Charles Emmanuel had agreed to invade France, and Charles Emmanuel in his relations with the Austrian commanders had all along experienced difficulties of the same kind as those with which Belle-Isle had to contend in his dealings with La Mina, though they were less extreme and less persistent. Ferdinand VI, anxious to make peace with England, was more inclined to keep back than to push on the military operations, and Louis XV wished to keep open the possibility of a reconciliation with Charles Emmanuel and therefore insisted that his own army should be regarded merely as auxiliary to that of Spain.

Thus on neither side were the conditions favourable to bold, energetic action.

Charles Emmanuel kept his troops for some days on the Assietta improving their entrenchments. But the account of the retreat of the French across the frontier soon convinced him that a fresh attack in this quarter was not to be feared.

At the beginning of August he had a conference with the Austrian commander-in-chief, Browne, and with the English general, Wentworth, to whom he explained a plan of campaign suitable both to his own policy and that of his allies.

The British Government was anxious that the combined army should again invade France in order to relieve the pressure exercised by the French army in Flanders, and to this Maria Theresa, though she would have preferred

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the recapture of Genoa and the invasion of Naples, had reluctantly agreed.

Charles Emmanuel saw no advantage to himself from an invasion of France, but was anxious if possible to recover his own territory, the county of Nice. He proposed, therefore, to assemble the combined army at Borgo San Dalmazzo near Cuneo. From this point there was the easiest route into France by the valley of the Stura over the Col della Maddalena and then either down the Ubaye to Barcelonnette or by the Col de Vars to Guillestre. The difficulty was that Fort Tournoux at the confluence of the Ubaye and the Ubayette commanded both the route to Barcelonnette and that to the Col de Vars, and that if the French should be in force here, both routes would be closed, for Fort Tournoux could neither be stormed nor besieged.

The valley of the Stura is walled-in on the south by the main range of the Maritime Alps, which runs in a great curve from the Col della Maddalena to a point overlooking Ormea. Across this range a number of passes lead from the Stura to the county of Nice, those most used being the Col Ste Anna from Vinadio to Isola in the valley of the Tinée, and, from Borgo San Dalmazzo, the Col de Fenêtre to S. Martin in the valley of the Vesubie and the Col di Tenda to the valley of the Roja.

These three southern valleys communicate with one another by mule-tracks and foot-paths over the spurs running southward from the Alps. If, therefore, the move towards Barcelonnette should prove impracticable, the army had but to turn to its left and cross the passes into the county of Nice.

In the county of Nice, except close to the coast, there was not a road fit for a wheeled vehicle; only mule-tracks or foot-paths led from place to place. The Tinée and the Vesubie, near their confluence, ran through deep impassable gorges, and the Roja, just below Saorgio, formed a defile so narrow that it could not be forced against the slightest opposition.

The army of Leutrum was assembled at Borgomaro

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and held Saorgio. Borgo San Dalmazzo was a central position from which the combined army in three or four marches could move either to Fort Tournoux or into the county of Nice, where it could combine with Leutrum for an attack on Belle-Isle. Belle-Isle's forces in Dauphiné were separated by many marches from his forces round Nice. In case of an attack on either body it was impossible for one to reinforce the other in time.

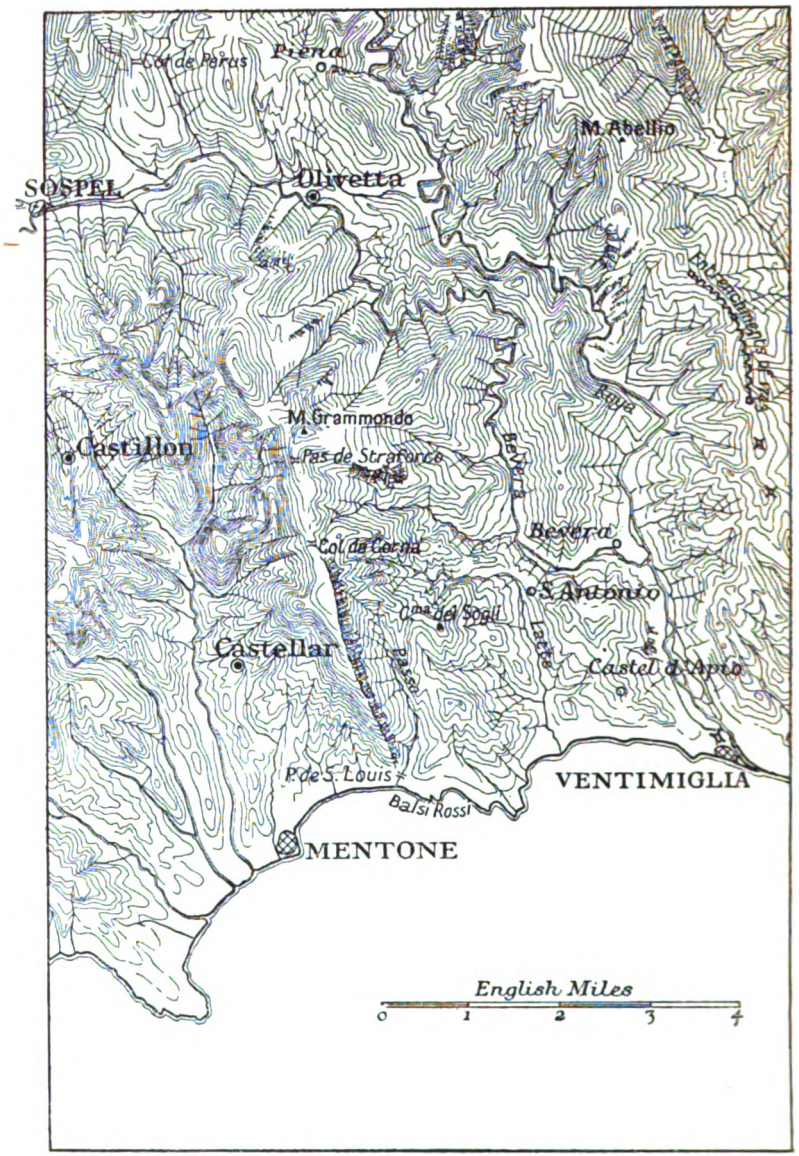
Wentworth and Browne accepted Charles Emmanuel's plan, and by August 23, 35 Austrian and 16 Piedmontese battalions were assembled at Borgo San Dalmazzo.

Charles Emmanuel entrusted to the Austrians the movement towards Tournoux, which he regarded as a demonstration not likely to do more than distract Belle-Isle's attention, while with his own army he would attempt the recovery of the county of Nice.

Leutrum was to advance from Borgomaro across the Roja, his right reinforced by troops sent over the Col di Tenda, and other columns over the Cols of Fenêtre and Ste Anna were to threaten Belle-Isle's left. Leutrum started from Borgomaro with his main body on August 24, and reached Dolceacqua on the 31st, while the Austrian forces moved up the Val Stura and the Piedmontese columns crossed from Vinadio and Entraque to Isola and Lantosque. Belle-Isle, hearing on the 27th that Leutrum and Charles Emmanuel were moving, sent a reinforcement to Ventimiglia and ordered up from Castellane the 18 battalions, of which the last reached Nice on September 2.

By way of demonstration against Belle-Isle's extreme left Charles Emmanuel ordered attacks on Mailly's posts at the Col de l'Echelle, Mont Genèvre, and Cervières. These were, however, all repulsed, as Mailly had well organized his defences. In the valley of the Stura the Austrian demonstration proved ineffectual, for Villemur at Tournoux well supported his outposts on the Col della Maddalena. The Austrian generals were unfamiliar with the ground, on which the French were at home. On August 31 the Austrian advance-guard at the Col sent a party down the road to attack the village of Larche, but the

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Operations for the relief of Ventimiglia.

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French sent parties along the side valleys, which came down on to the road behind the Austrians and captured them. On September 19 the Austrians attempted a counter-stroke. They sent strong parties by the side valleys to attack Larche from both flanks while their column in the main valley should attack it in front. But the French were on the alert and retired before the flanking columns arrived. A few days later the snow began to fall and the Austrian troops were gradually withdrawn from the valley.

On August 30 Belle-Isle collected his troops into 4 camps, 14 battalions at Eze, 37 in and around Drap, 14 about Châteauneuf, and 8 at Levens. On September 3 he sent detachments to occupy l'Escarène and Luceram.

On September 3 a Piedmontese force appeared in front of Mentone, whereupon the Spanish officer commanding the 800 men there stationed withdrew his troops, and La Mina, who was inspecting the works in progress at La Turbie, withdrew the party holding Castillon, which was promptly occupied by the enemy, who next day invested Ventimiglia.

On September 4 La Mina received instructions from the Spanish Government that he was henceforward to concur in Belle-Isle's plans and to co-operate with him; but though he now set his troops to work fortifying the positions which they occupied, he was still very unwilling to take determined action or to run risks. Meanwhile Leutrum had been moving. At Dolceacqua he now had 35 battalions, and an almost equal force was by this time spread over the northern part of the county of Nice. There were 2,000 men at Belvedere, 2,400 at Peira Cava, 2,500 at the Aution, Moulinet, and Mangiabo; 7 battalions were encamped at the Col de Perus, 6 at Piena, and 4 at Olivette. Sospel was held by irregulars and there were posts at Castillon, Castellar, and Balsirossi between Menton and Ventimiglia. On September 10 Belle-Isle, convinced that the passes from Piedmont into Dauphiné would shortly be closed by the snow, and that Charles Emmanuel could therefore undertake no serious operation in that region, ordered 12 battalions from Tournoux,

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where Villemur had been reinforced from Briançon, to march to Castellane.

On October 7 Belle-Isle proposed to La Mina that they should undertake the relief of Ventimiglia. The Spanish general was not convinced, and wished to postpone action.

On the 11th a conference was held at which, besides the two commanders, were present Mortagne the French quartermaster-general, Sermonio (Zermeno) the Spanish engineer-in-chief, and Bourcet. This meeting, like most councils of war, decided to do nothing, Mortagne in particular dwelling on the risk that if the French army moved to its right the Piedmontese from the Aution and from the Col de Perus would advance to turn its left.

Mortagne's objections to the attack were by no means absurd, for the position of the Piedmontese army was extraordinarily strong. From Olivette on the Bevera to the coast near Mentone runs the ridge of Mont Grammonde about seven miles long, which to-day forms the frontier between France and Italy. It is a hog's-back 3,000 feet high, rising in the centre to 4,600 feet. Its western side is steep, almost precipitous, and the only paths crossing it, except at the ends, are at the Col de Corna and the Pas de Straforco. To force this ridge, if defended, was hardly possible, and in its southern portion there was behind it a second very strong position on the ridge between the brook of Passo and that of di Latte. At the turn of the valley di Latte was S. Antonio on a narrow ridge between that stream and the Bevera. On the south by the sea the route from Mentone to Ventimiglia was blocked by the gorge of the Passo and had to pass a narrow defile between the shore and the rocks of Balsirossi. No wonder that Mortagne and many others thought an attack in this quarter impossible.

Leutrum had about 1,500 men at Balsirossi, 300 at Castellar, and only 60 at Castillon. All these were Austrian troops. If driven from the ridge of Grammonde they could fall back to the strong position on the left bank of the Passo. Behind these forward lines is the ridge which overlooks the left bank of the Roja. This Leutrum had

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fortified along the whole of the seven miles between the sea and Mont Abellio. The strength of this position was beyond doubt, and therefore Leutrum could afford to economize troops on his left in order to strengthen his right, where he had no less than 46 battalions, 23 at Breil, 17 between Olivette, Piena, and the Col de Perus, and the rest on the mountains which overlook Moulinet and the sources of the Bevera. Mortagne was afraid that while the combined army was attacking the ridge of the Grammonde the Piedmontese right wing would move through Luceram and l'Escarène towards Nice and cut off its retreat. Leutrum relied chiefly on the line of the Roja and had instructed the Austrian officers in charge of his advance posts on the line of the Grammonde, that he did not expect them to resist to the last extremity.

Bourcet had made a plan of attack based on his intimate knowledge of the ground, acquired by careful reconnaissance in 1744, 1745, and 1746.

On October 14 Belle-Isle learned that Charles Emmanuel had gone back to Turin, leaving Leutrum in command of the Piedmontese army, that the Austrian troops were marching off in successive parties towards Lombardy, and that the Piedmontese detachments at Peira Cava and the Col de Raus had been withdrawn towards the upper Roja. The threat to the French left wing was diminished by this withdrawal.

On the 16th Bourcet,

'Moved not only as a citizen zealous for the good of the service, but as one devoted to the honour and glory of Marshal Belle-Isle in connexion with that of the nation, went to see Belle-Isle in his room very early in the morning to tell him that he ought to pay no further attention to the speeches of M. de Mortagne, that it was time to take action, otherwise Ventimiglia would succumb, and the loss of this place would infallibly lead to that of the county of Nice. The General readily adopted this view and ordered the engineer, Bourcet, to go and tell the Marquis de la Mina that he had made up his mind to march next day, the 17th, to the relief of Ventimiglia, and that if he found a difficulty in ordering the Spaniards to march, he would march with the French alone.

'The Spanish general could not decline so favourable a

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resolve without showing his ill-will and the slightness of his desire to take action; he was therefore obliged to agree with Marshal Belle-Isle as to the dispositions for the next day.'

On October 17, 4 columns were formed, 2 on the right of 24 battalions at La Turbie and Peille, and 2 on the left of 37 battalions at l'Escarène and Berre, each group having an advance guard, that on the right of some 1,200 men, and that on the left of something like 1,500. All these troops set out at midnight on the 18th, the right advance guard to Castellar, the left to Castillon. The Austrians abandoned both posts, retiring from Castillon to Strafforco, and from Castellar to the Col de Corna. Of the two right columns the first was checked at the bridge of S. Louis but occupied the ridge which looks down upon it, while the second reached Castellar. On the left the third column crossed the Col de Braus to the slope overlooking Sospel, while the fourth reached the Bevera above Sospel and marched up its right bank.

On the 19th the fourth column crossed the Bevera above Sospel and marched down its left bank through Sospel towards the Col de Perus, while the third column marched from Sospel, it is not clear whether by the Bevera or by Strafforco, towards S. Antonio; thus offering to turn the right wing of the Austrians.

On the 20th, while the first column on the right crossed the bridge of S. Louis and pushed up the hill behind Balsirossi, the second column moved down from the Col de Corna along the ridge towards Cima dei Sogli, while the head of the third column approached S. Antonio. Thereupon the enemy retired from the position on the left bank of the Passo, through Castel d'Apio and Ventimiglia, destroying the bridge over the Roja.

In his dispatch reporting the relief of the castle of Ventimiglia, Belle-Isle wrote:

'This event, important through all the circumstances, was accompanied by so many difficulties, and its issue, favourable or unfavourable, was likely to have so much influence on affairs in general, that it has seemed to me necessary that the King should be informed in detail of all the combinations that were required to fulfil a purpose which His Majesty had so much at

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heart and in which, indeed, the honour of his arms was so deeply concerned. The person who, beyond comparison, would be best qualified to perform this mission is M. Bourcet; however well-informed you may already be of all his merit, it is impossible that you should be acquainted with its full extent; he unites so many talents and virtues that I cannot sufficiently beg you to be good enough to obtain for him the just reward by causing him to be made brigadier-general. He has been the soul of all that we have accomplished.

'Every general whom the King will honour with the command of his army in this country will speak to you in the same terms, and if his presence were not indispensable to me for all that remains to be done I should have chosen him as the most worthy and in every respect the most suitable.'

During the next few days Belle-Isle repaired the bridge at Ventimiglia and reconnoitred the left of Leutrum's position, which he found too strong to be attacked. Belle-Isle recalled his reconnaissance, and the Piedmontese troops of the right wing withdrew from all their posts except Breil, Saorgio, and the valley of Cairos. The operations then ended and the armies of both sides went into winter quarters.

Leutrum remained in command of so much of the Piedmontese army as was required to guard his positions during the winter, and such French troops as were left as winter garrisons in the county of Nice were put under the command of Mirepoix. The bulk of the troops of the one army returned to Lombardy and of the other to Provence, Languedoc, and Savoy.

In the spring of 1748 the armies were again assembled on the frontiers, preparations were made for a new campaign and plans of campaign prepared. But except at Genoa there were no serious operations in the Italian theatre of war.

In February negotiations began at Aix-la-Chapelle, and on April 30 preliminaries of peace were signed between France, Great Britain, and Holland.

To the terms of these preliminaries Maria Theresa agreed on May 25 and Charles Emmanuel on May 31. Accordingly, hostilities ceased along the Alpine frontier, but neither the Court of Spain nor the Republic of Genoa

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accepted the preliminaries until the 28th of June, and hostilities continued on Genoese territory for some weeks longer than in the west, and the French as well as the Spanish troops were authorized to continue as long as might be necessary the defence of Genoese territory against the Austrians.

Schulenburg's decision to raise the siege of Genoa did not modify Maria Theresa's determination to take that city, but it involved postponement of the effort, which it was not found practical to renew until the following year. On the death of the Duke of Boufflers the command of the French and Spanish troops was taken up provisionally by the French general, De Bissy, who by that time had 7,000 French and 4,000 Spanish troops besides 3,000 Genoese regulars. The Austrians still had 7,000 troops at and about Novi, who were in August reinforced by 5,000 sent from the army in Piedmont. In September Bissy organized a raid from Varazze to Sassello and took 400 prisoners whom he exchanged with Charles Emmanuel for as many French prisoners, thus strengthening his forces. Louis XV had appointed the Duc de Richelieu to represent him at Genoa and to command the French and Spanish troops there. At the end of September 1747 Richelieu landed at Genoa and took command. He made an expedition to Campo Ligure, which he invested but failed to besiege for lack of workmen to construct the necessary batteries. In November he occupied Spezzia and Sarzana with a view to the defence of the eastern territory of Genoa.

In January 1748 Richelieu received considerable reinforcements, raising his strength by the end of February to 24 French and 8 Spanish battalions. In January he repulsed an Austrian attack on Voltri. At the end of March he attempted the capture of the Castle of Savona, still held by Piedmontese troops. A part of his forces was landed west of the town while the rest marched from Genoa, but the landing was mismanaged and the expedition had to be withdrawn. He also sent troops to Corsica to assist the Genoese in the defence of Bastia against the insurgent Corsicans. This expedition fulfilled its purpose.

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During April and May an Austrian army of 48 battalions under Browne was collected at Parma for an attack on Genoa by the Apennines and the Riviera di Levante, while 14 Austrian battalions under Nadasti were held ready to advance by the Bocchetta.

Richelieu had early intelligence of the assembly of Browne's forces and had ample time to make preparations for his defence, which covered a wide front. He seized and garrisoned the Castle of Massa, outside Genoese territory, and had posts at Sarzana and Spezzia. Besides the Genoese regulars and the many thousands of armed peasants and citizens, he had 39 French and Spanish battalions, of which he kept 9 at Genoa, to hold the fortifications. He put his main body at Sestri Levante and the rest of his troops partly in the valley of the Vara, and partly at Cazarza and Chiavari. On the 28th of May Browne reached Borgotaro. Richelieu made a raid on Villafranca in the upper Magra Valley and destroyed the stores which Browne had there collected. On the 4th of June Browne pushed an advance-guard into the Vara Valley and took Varese, but was checked by Richelieu's advance-guard at Salino. On the 5th Browne strengthened the force at Varese to 35 battalions, while he sent 7 to threaten Borzonasca, while Nadasti from Voltaggio moved up to the Bocchetta. Browne's attack in the Vara Valley was delivered on the 9th of June without success. Richelieu, who by this time had concentrated his troops in the Vara Valley and was about to attack Browne on the 10th, received that day a dispatch informing him that Maria Theresa had agreed to the preliminaries of peace. He suspended the attack and sent a flag of truce to give the information to Browne and to suggest an immediate armistice. He understood Browne to have agreed to this, but two days later, when his deputy was discussing with Browne's deputy the terms on which hostilities should be suspended, the Austrian troops attacked the Spaniards at Borzonasca, and on the same day Nadasti delivered attacks in the Polcevera Valley and at Voltri. At all these points the Austrians were repulsed, and though the misunder-

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standing does not seem to have been quite cleared up, the suspension of hostilities was finally arranged on June 15.

The Treaty of Peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle in October and within a few weeks accepted by all the Powers concerned. By its terms the Duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla were given to the Infant Don Philip. This limited satisfaction of the ambition of Elizabeth Farnese was due, not to the fighting of the Spanish army nor to that of the French army which had assisted it, but to the victories of the French army in Flanders and to the pressure put by Great Britain on Maria Theresa to make sacrifices in order to bring the war to an end.

Genoa retained her territories exactly as they were before she entered into the war as the ally of France and Spain. That she had successfully defended herself and retained her possessions was due chiefly to the determination of Louis XV, chivalrous for once, not to allow her to suffer for the sacrifices she had made in the cause of her allies.

Louis XV obtained for France in return for the lives and treasure expended during seven years of war no advantage whatever.

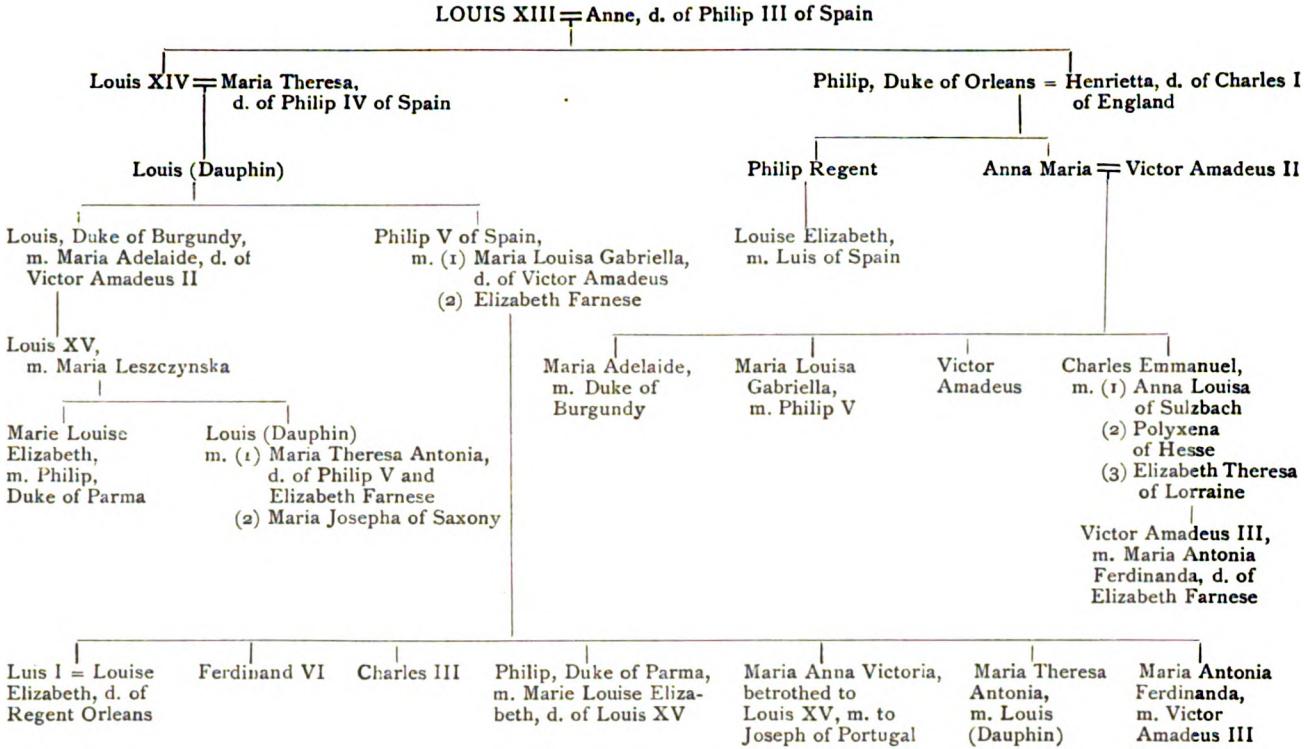
Maria Theresa in eight years of war had justified her inheritance of her father's dominions. She had recovered the Imperial crown for her family and had retained the bulk of her territories at the sacrifice of Silesia and of the Italian districts ceded in 1743 to Charles Emmanuel and in 1748 to Don Philip.

Charles Emmanuel retained his territories with the frontiers as they were before the war with the addition of the districts ceded to him by Maria Theresa in 1743 except the Duchy of Piacenza west of the Nura, ceded to Sardinia by the Treaty of Worms but now with the rest of the Duchy assigned to Don Philip. He recovered the Duchy of Savoy, so long occupied by the Spaniards, and the county of Nice, both districts, as the war had proved, indefensible against French invasion.

The defence of Piedmont, carried on with varying fortune through six campaigns, was thus in the end crowned with success.

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APPENDIX A


LOUIS XIII = Anne, d. of Philip III of Spain
Louis XIV = Maria Theresa, d. of Philip IV of Spain
Philip, Duke of Orleans = Henrietta, d. of Charles I of England
Louis (Dauphin)
Philip Regent
Anna Maria = Victor Amadeus II
Louis, Duke of Burgundy, m. Maria Adelaide, d. of Victor Amadeus II
Philip V of Spain, m. (1) Maria Louisa Gabriella, d. of Victor Amadeus (2) Elizabeth Farnese
Louise Elizabeth, m. Luis of Spain
Louis XV, m. Maria Leszczynska
Maria Adelaide, m. Duke of Burgundy
Maria Louisa Gabriella, m. Philip V
Victor Amadeus
Charles Emmanuel, m. (1) Anna Louisa of Sulzbach (2) Polyxena of Hesse (3) Elizabeth Theresa of Lorraine
Marie Louise Elizabeth, m. Philip, Duke of Parma
Louis (Dauphin) m. (1) Maria Theresa Antonia, d. of Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese (2) Maria Josepha of Saxony
Victor Amadeus III, m. Maria Antonia Ferdinanda, d. of Elizabeth Farnese
Luis I = Louise Elizabeth, d. of Regent Orleans
Ferdinand VI
Charles III
Philip, Duke of Parma, m. Marie Louise Elizabeth, d. of Louis XV
Maria Anna Victoria, betrothed to Louis XV, m. to Joseph of Portugal
Maria Theresa Antonia, m. Louis (Dauphin)
Maria Antonia Ferdinanda, m. Victor Amadeus III

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APPENDIX B

Memorandum on the state of the supplies and on the means to be employed for provisioning the army as far as Albenga, written by Maillebois at Antibes, May 20, 1745.

'To enable the army to subsist on its march, the first thing is that the 700 mules destined for the service of supply, which will arrive here on the 28th inst., must start on the 30th for Ventimiglia, where they will arrive on the 31st. They will start back on June 1, reach Nice on June 2, will start again on the 4th, reaching Ventimiglia on the 5th, and will return again to Nice, arriving on the 7th.

'These two convoys together will carry to Ventimiglia about 3,000 quintals of flour. (A quintal = 100 lb.)

'The first division of troops (i. e. the brigades destined for Triora, Rezzo, and La Pieve) will start from Nice in the first days of June; it will probably be destined to make its way into the mountains, and will be composed of 8 or 9 battalions. It will consume about 8,155 rations a day. (A ration was 1½ lb.)

'On starting from Nice it will take bread for four days; it will again take bread for four days at Ventimiglia on its way to its destination. From Ventimiglia it will have three days' march. Bread will be due to it the next day but one after its arrival.

'To enable this division to subsist, the 300 extra mules must start with it, each carrying two bags of 100 lb. (making in all 600 quintals) together with its own forage.

'The division will march to Ventimiglia in three days, and the mules in two. The ovens to be built at that town must be in working order on the 1st of June and be ready to bake the bread for the division. The division's 300 mules, carrying 600 quintals of flour, will leave 200 at Ventimiglia and the 100 mules will there be loaded with double-baked bread instead of the 200 bags of flour; if each of them carries only 120 rations, the 100 mules between them will carry 12,000, pretty nearly enough for two days, which, added to the four issued to the troops on starting from Ventimiglia, make up their subsistence for six days. The 400 quintals of flour carried by the 200 remaining mules will last for four more days, so that altogether this division will have its supply secured for ten days. The mules will need six days

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for the journey to Ventimiglia, counting one day's stay. They will be back at the division's camp on the ninth day, bringing six days' supply, and will repeat this manœuvre as often as may be required.

'The remaining 18 battalions and the head-quarters, whether marching in one body or by divisions, will also take four days' bread when they start from Nice, and the same quantity at Ventimiglia and Oneglia, which will last them to Albenga. They will consume nearly 200 quintals a day, so that there must be at Ventimiglia for the four days 800 quintals of flour. By the 5th there will be there 3,000 quintals, so that there will be 2,300 left either to supply the cavalry or the 1st division, or to be sent on to Oneglia.

'On the 9th of June the original 700 mules will start from Nice carrying 1,500 quintals of flour to Oneglia, where there are already 1,500 left by the Spaniards. This will suffice to maintain the 18 battalions, the head-quarters, and the cavalry for ten days at the rate of 25,000 rations a day.

'From Oneglia the 700 mules can carry on the supplies for Albenga, where the Spaniards will probably hand over to us about another 1,500 quintals. We can also send to Monaco or to Ventimiglia for the 100,000 rations of biscuit of which the preparation at Monaco must be ordered as soon as possible, independently of the further 100,000 which are to be made at Villefranche.

'The remaining mules fit for work, about 500 in number, which will probably arrive at Nice on the 12th, can start from there on the 16th laden with such supplies as may be ordered, and with a sufficient escort. They will arrive on the 20th at Oneglia, and on the 22nd if required at Albenga, where they will probably join the army and where further measures will be taken for its supply. . . .

'As for Albenga, after the transport thither of the supplies mentioned in this memorandum, and the supplement expected from the Spaniards, we shall not be able to complete the storage of all that we shall require, except by way of Genoa, which at this moment seems to be equally difficult and uncertain.'

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APPENDIX C

The following is a sample of the instructions given by Maillebois to his subordinates when detached from the main army:

May 30, 1745.

Instructions for M. le Marquis de Mirepoix, Lieutenant-general commanding the seven battalions destined to operate towards Pont de Nava.

'His Royal Highness having chosen M. le Marquis de Mirepoix to command the corps destined to operate towards Pont de Nava, that officer will have under his orders the brigades of La Reine and of the Lorraine guards, altogether seven battalions, a hundred mountain fusiliers, and two mountain-guns.

'The purpose of his march and of his operations will be to compel the enemy to abandon the valley of Oneglia by cutting its communication with Pont de Nava, to make the King of Sardinia uneasy concerning the route offered by this bridge, to march to it if circumstances and the later orders which he will receive in consequence should require it, and to cover the march of the army along the Riviera of Genoa and its communication with the county of Nice.

'To place himself in a position to fulfil all these purposes M. de Mirepoix with his two brigades will start from Nice on the 1st of June to go and camp at La Turbie, on the 2nd at Menton, on the 3rd at Campo Rosso, on the 4th at Pigna, where they will remain on the 5th.

'On the 6th he will go and encamp at Saint-Jean-de-Pra, the 7th at Triola (Triora), where he will remain three days; every marching day after Menton he will send with his advance-guard an engineer with a hundred workmen to prepare the roads and to ensure the passage of his vehicles.

'M. de Mirepoix will try at Pigna to have news of the movements which the King of Sardinia may make in the region towards which his division is to march in order to take his measures accordingly. If he learns that Triola is not occupied in force by the troops of the King of Sardinia on the day when

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he arrives at Pigna he will send off a detachment of seven companies of grenadiers, seven picquets, and all the mountain fusiliers; the same day they will proceed to Triola to occupy that place and to establish themselves there with all proper military precautions.

'M. de Mirepoix will entrust the conduct of this advance-guard to M. de Larnage unless he thinks it suitable to march with it himself. This forced march is judged to be necessary to prevent the enemy from being before us at Triola, as he would undoubtedly be if his plan were to begin the offensive before us and to disturb us in our march along the coast.

'A commissary will march with this detachment to see on his arrival what resources he can find at Triola for subsistence of every kind; he will receive detailed instructions as to the purpose of his mission and will communicate them to M. de Mirepoix.

'The day after his arrival at Triola M. de Mirepoix will push a strong detachment to Rezzo to occupy that place; he will cause the march from Triola to Rezzo to be reconnoitred. As the distance between these two places is too great for the two brigades to be able to cover it in one day, in case afterwards he should be obliged to move to Rezzo he will cause to be reconnoitred a camp between the two places and will then make the movement in two marches.

'In the neighbourhood of Triola or of Rezzo M. de Mirepoix will choose a position in which he could have nothing to fear from the King of Sardinia in case that prince should wish to come out against him in force; M. de Mirepoix must be able to await in that position the reinforcements which will be sent to him from the army according to the verified reports which he will make.

'If M. de Mirepoix moves with all his force to Rezzo he will leave at Castel Franco a post of 150 men and another at Triola of 300 men; these two posts will secure his communication by his left with Pigna, where he will have left a small post, as also at Dolceacqua. They will supply the escorts which may be necessary for the convoys of provisions that may be sent to him and will be able to resist any detachment which might come from Saorgio, from La Briga, or from Mendatica to attack this communication, which it is very necessary to retain.

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'M. de Mirepoix is informed that the same day on which he will push his detachment to Rezzo a strong detachment will be sent from the valley of Oneglia and, following the heights, will move upon Pieve, which it will occupy.

'M. de Mirepoix from the post of Rezzo will also send detachments to his right to occupy Lavina in order by their means to communicate with the post of Pieve and with the army assembled in the neighbourhood of Albenga.

'It is not presumed that the enemy who now occupies the upper part of the valley of Oneglia will dare to remain there when he knows that M. de Mirepoix is marching by Triola upon Rezzo; however, it is necessary that he should take precautions against the peasants of that valley with which he can communicate from Rezzo by a route which goes to Coni, a village of that valley three hours distant, and by another route which goes to the Chapel of St. Bernard, whence it drops to San Bartolomeo, a village of the same valley.

'At the beginning of his establishment at Rezzo M. de Mirepoix will draw his supplies from Ventimiglia by Dolceacqua, Pigna, and Triola until after the evacuation of the valley of Oneglia. Arrangements will be made to send them afterwards by Pieve in case this route is considered shorter and more convenient; the necessary forage must be obtained from the country or the infantry horses must be put to pasture.

'M. de Mirepoix must take care to have precise news of the enemy and will communicate to M. le Maréchal all the news that he receives.

'As it is impossible to foresee in detail the movements which the enemy may make in this region, reliance is placed on the prudence and on the intelligence of M. de Mirepoix for the details of the movements which he may make; he may even attack the posts which the enemy occupy on the route or which they may occupy in the neighbourhood of this position if he thinks he can do so with success (as to which he alone can judge); but he will make no move against the posts on the Tanaro, i. e. Pont de Nava and Ormea, except after receiving orders to that effect, because this manœuvre ought to be concerted with that of the army assembled at Albenga.

'Done at Nice the 30th of May seventeen hundred and forty-five.'

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INDEX

Alberoni, 13, 16, 18, 19, 55, 80.
Alciati, Chevalier, General, 311, 312.
Alexander the Great, 176.
Amelot, 82, 84, 191.
Andrea Doria, Admiral, 194.
Anna Louisa of Sulzbach, 22.
Anson, 36.
Aquaviva, Cardinal, 45, 178.
Aremburu, 146.
Argenson, Comte d', 87, 108, 109, 122, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 134, 138, 139, 140, 141, 167, 174, 191, 214, 262, 275, 276, 300, 301.
Argenson, Marquis d', 191, 192, 193, 197, 214, 226, 227, 228, 230, 231, 232, 234, 236, 240, 241, 247, 248, 270, 271, 274, 302.
Argentera or Argentiera or Argentière: (1) on the stream that runs down to Sauze de Cesana, 871, 297; (2) at the head of Val Stura, 58, 87, 135.
d'Arnault, 285, 286, 302, 303, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311.
Arneth, 304.
Arteaga, General, 65.
d'Asfeld, 57.
Aspremont, Count, 51, 52, 53, 54, 76.
Augsburg, League of, 6.
Augustus II (Elector of Saxony and King of Poland), 20, 23.

Balbian, Marquis, 267, 268, 269.
Barail, Brigadier-General du, 206.
Bartenstein, 24, 26, 178, 202.
Battles:
Assietta, 309.
Bassignana, 218.
Campo Santo, 75.
Cartagena, 39.
Chianale, 88.
Czaslau, 49.
Dettingen, 82.
Battles (cont.)—
Fontenoy, 226.
Guastalla, 23.
Hohenfriedberg, 226.
Kesselsdorf, 229.
Kolin, 81.
Madonna dell' Olmo, 170.
Mollwitz, 39.
Nocera, 189.
Olmütz, 40.
Parma, 23.
Piacenza, 252.
Pietralunga, 155.
Porto Bello, 25.
Tidone, 257.
Toulon, 101.
Velletri, 183.
Villefranche, 119.
Baudrillart, 57, 98.
Beaucaire, H. de, 21.
Belle-Isle, Chevalier de, 31, 278, 280, 286, 289, 297, 299, 302, 303, 306, 311, 313, 314, 315.
Belle-Isle, Comte de, 27, 30, 31, 56, 98, 196, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 289, 290, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 306, 308, 309, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325.
Berenklau, 249.
Bernez, Marquis du, 312.
Bertolo, 21.
Berwick, 59, 159.
Bissy, General de, 326.
Le Blanc, 302.
Bogino, 229, 235, 237, 243.
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 7, 93, 94, 157, 158, 159, 176, 200, 201, 286, 301.
Botta d'Adorno, 253, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266, 267, 283, 287, 289, 290.
Boufflers, Duke of, 292, 293, 326.
Bourbon, Duke of, 18.

Digitized by Google

Bourcet, early life, 57; sent to advise de Glimes, his memorandum on the Alps, 59; plans march to Savoy, 61; and attack on Piedmontese army, 63, 64; plans invasion of Piedmont, 86; and attack on Chianale, 88; urges retreat, 91; on selection of generals, 94; against advance by Riviera but proposes advance from Dauphiné, 127; reflections on the plan, 135; letters to d'Argenson, 137-9; definition of a 'position', 147; on subdividing and re-uniting the army, 158, 176; criticism of battle of Madonna dell' Olmo, 172; A.Q.M.G. to Maillebois, 197; reconnaissance of Tanaro, 218; plan for passing the Po, 254; objections to Riviera route in 1747, 294; plan for attack on the Assietta, 313; criticism of the battle, 314; proposes relief of Ventimiglia, 323; Belle-Isle's eulogy, 324.
Breteuil, Marquess of, 57, 59.
Bricherasio, Count, 305, 306, 312.
Broglie, Maréchal de, 159, 196, 247.
Browne, General, 112, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 230, 239, 240, 245, 249, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 262, 279, 280, 282, 283, 284, 286, 305, 316, 317, 319, 327.
Brun, Lieut.-General de, 206.
Byng, Admiral, 297.

Caesar, 166.
Campo Florido, Prince of, 98, 132, 197.
Campo Santo, Marquis of, Major-General de la Torre, 78, 80, 146, 154, 155, 157, 163, 268, 269.
Canute, King, 4.
Carignan, Princess of, 228.
Carpasio, Passo di, west of Borgomaro, 205, 206.
Cartaret, Lord, 82.
Carutti, 57.
Castelar, Marquis of, 38, 45, 47, 53, 117, 119, 120, 137, 146, 211, 249, 250, 252, 258.
Castropignano, Duke of, 45, 53.
Catinat, 59, 159.
Chablais, 310.
Champeaux, Levesque de, 191, 228, 229, 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 248.
Charles II of Spain, 13, 15.
Charles V, Emperor, 5, 17, 194.
Charles VI, Emperor, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 26, 194.
Charles VII, Emperor, 40, 201.
Charles VIII of France, 5.
Charles, Don Carlos (son of Elizabeth Farnese), 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 31, 37, 56, 92, 96, 98, 99, 106, 110, 111, 112, 129, 131, 132, 134, 135, 138, 139, 173, 178, 179, 181, 183, 187, 259.
Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, 99, 100.
Charles Emmanuel I, 6, 194.
Charles Emmanuel II, 194.
Charles Emmanuel III, early life, succession, 21-22; war of the Polish Succession, 23; revealing faithlessness of Fleury and Louis XV, 24; negotiations on death of Charles VI, 26, 35, 39, 41; his further purpose, 42; with Traun's help takes Modena and Mirandola, and drives Montemar out of the Emilia, 47-52; refuses to invade Naples, 52; returns to Turin, 61; campaign in Savoy, 62-6; negotiates Treaty of Worms, 82-4; preparations for defence at Casteldelfino, 89; reason for his inaction during the attack on Villefranche, 120-1; his plans for defence of Dauphiné, 132-4; reinforces Pietralunga, 155; retreats to Sampeyre, 156; his choice of position of Becetto, 161; arranges for relief of Cuneo, 169; battle of Madonna dell' Olmo, 170-1; reinforces Cuneo, 172; his generalship, 175-7; preparations for campaign of 1745, 207; takes position at Piovera and at Bassignana, 212; retreat after Bassignana, 219; distribution of troops for winter quarters, 223; returns to Turin, 225; negotiation with d'Argenson, 226-35; arranges attack on Asti, 235; his conduct considered, 247; his manœuvres against Maillebois, 250-2; takes

Digitized by Google

Charles Emmanuel III (cont.)—
charge of the observation of Piacenza, 255; moves to Santa Christina, 256; and to Borghetto, 257; follows Franco-Spanish retreat as far as Casteggio, 258; moves up Bormida to cut off Franco-Spanish retreat, 262; occupies Savona, 267; reaches Bordighera, 269; turns Ventimiglia, 269; ill of small-pox, 279; convalescent, 282; promises reinforcements for siege of Genoa, 290; reassures Schulenburg in regard to Belle-Isle's advance along the coast, 304; prepares defence against attack from Dauphiné, 305; orders fortification of the Assietta, 305; withdraws Della Rocca's battalions from Genoa, 305; orders them to Pinerolo, 306; his plan of campaign, 317; accepted, 319; accepts preliminaries of peace, 325; his gains and losses in the war, 328.
Charles, Prince of Lorraine, 29, 82, 96, 185, 228, 233, 273.
Chateauroux, Madame de, 106.
Chauvelin, 21, 22, 191, 192, 226.
Chevert, 154, 155, 156, 157, 206, 214, 222, 223, 241, 243, 244, 251, 282, 284.
Christina, wife of Victor Amadeus I, 6.
Cinsan or Cinzano, 80, 120, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 214, 222.
Colbert, 196.
Collingwood, 105.
Colloredo, Count, 305, 306, 311, 312.
Conrad II, 4.
Conti, Prince of, 100, 107, 108, 109, 110, 113, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 138, 139, 140, 141, 147, 160, 161, 163, 166, 167, 173, 174, 175, 176, 193, 196, 197, 200, 201.
Corvolan, 249.
de Court, 37, 100, 105.

Dessau, Leopold of, 229.

Elector of Bavaria, 11, 100.
Elector of Saxony, 11.
Elizabeth Farnese, marriage, journey to Spain, children, ambition for them, 13-17; early political intrigues, 18-20; letter to Fleury, 28; negotiations with France and Sardinia, 31; her army in Catalonia, 36; its landing drives Austria and Sardinia together, 38; recalls Montemar, 53; conditions of her life as Queen of Spain, 54, 55; sends Don Philip to Provence, 56; supersedes de Glimes by La Mina, 63; orders de Gages to attack, 74; urges La Mina to invade Piedmont, 85; nature of her mistake, 95; her mistrust of France, 105, 106; eager to help her sons by sending her army to Milan, 112, 113; her rejection of Conti's plans, 130, 131; anxiety of Louis XV to please her, 141; eager for her army to reach Lombardy, 173; ignorant of Maillebois's qualifications, 197; and of the principles of war, 199; insists upon Don Philip's advance to Piacenza and Parma, 214, 215; her views inconsistent with d'Argenson's policy, 226, 228; her reception of d'Argenson's draft treaty with Charles Emmanuel, 232; Louis XV eager to recover her goodwill, 248, 251; favours Castelar, 252; end of her power on death of Philip, 256; her ambition realized, 328.
Elizabeth Theresa, wife of Charles Emmanuel III, 25.
Emmanuel Philibert, 5, 7, 8, 22.
d'Escars, 307, 308, 314.
Eugene, Prince, 7, 10, 11, 19, 67, 274.

Ferdinand of Brunswick, 159.
Ferdinand VI (son of Philip V and Maria Louisa), 13, 17, 28, 256, 258, 259, 269, 278, 317.
Ferdinand and Isabella, 17.
Finestre, Colle delle: (1) between Susa and Fenestrelle, 60, 220, 296, 302, 313; (2) here called Col de Fenêtre, between St. Martin Lantosque and Entraque, 120, 318, 319.

Digitized by Google

Fleury, 20, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 38, 39, 45, 47, 56, 57, 59, 82, 98, 99, 106, 227.
Fouquet, 30.
Francis I, 5.
Francis II, 185.
Francis, son of the Duke of Lorraine, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany and Emperor, 11, 24, 26, 28, 34, 96, 178, 192, 201, 228, 229, 233.
Frederick II of Prussia, 31, 32, 39, 40, 49, 50, 81, 96, 100, 185, 201, 214, 226, 229.

de Gages, Don Juan, Count, 43, 50, 53, 54, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 87, 96, 97, 100, 108, 110, 111, 112, 113, 122, 125, 173, 179, 181, 183, 187, 188, 189, 190, 196, 198, 201, 202, 203, 205, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 224, 231, 237, 238, 239, 243, 245, 247, 249, 252, 258, 259, 274, 295.
George I, 18, 19.
George II, 31, 39, 82, 83, 84, 85, 96, 273.
Gisors, Comte de, 297.
Givry, Bailli de, 122, 124, 125, 138, 140, 146, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157.
de Glimes, Count, 47, 52, 56, 57, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 86, 123.
Gorano, Count, 182.
Gorzegno, Marquis of, 175, 229, 233, 235, 236, 237.
Gramont, 243.
Grimaldi, Prince of Monaco, 14.
Guendica, 124, 125, 146.
Guibert, 132.

Haddock, 37, 38, 103.
Hannibal, 176.
Henry IV, 6, 27.
von Hoen, Ritter, 120.
Huescar, Duke of, 233, 300.
Humbert called Whitehand, 4.

Isabel, Princess, daughter of Philip, Duke of Parma, 56.

James III, the Old Pretender, 99.
Jenkins' Ear, War of, 25.
Joseph I, Emperor, 7, 10, 11, 274.
Joseph II, son of Maria Theresa, 39.
Julich and Cleve, 12.

Kaunitz, Austrian Ambassador, 52, 101.
Khevenhüller, 40.

Lacy, 245, 246, 247.
Lautrec, 146, 217, 220, 221.
Leopold of Dessau, 229.
Leopold, Emperor, 12.
Lestock, 33, 102, 103, 104, 105.
Leutrum, General, 79, 167, 171, 172, 174, 214, 222, 223, 225, 244, 245, 246, 250, 251, 266, 289, 297, 298, 303, 304, 318, 319, 321, 322, 323, 325.
Lichtenstein, Prince of, 225, 231, 235, 238, 240, 244, 249, 252, 253.
Lobkowitz, 96, 97, 101, 108, 111, 112, 113, 125, 131, 133, 169, 173, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 201, 202, 205, 207.
Long, Commodore, 182, 183, 186.
Louis XII, 5.
Louis XIV, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 27, 31, 57, 159, 192.
Louis XV, marriage, 19; a crown for his father-in-law, 20; shakes confidence of Charles Emmanuel, 24; marries daughter to Don Philip, 25; trusts Fleury better than his own good sense, 27; Spanish appeals to his family feeling, 28-9; orders de Court to assist Spaniards, 37; permits Infant to enter Provence, 56; and to traverse Dauphiné, 61; protects Spanish army at Fort Baraux, 63; 'now I am Prime Minister', 82; accepts Charles Emmanuel's draft treaty, 84; reinforces La Mina, 86; negotiates with Spain treaty of Fontainebleau, 98; and plans operations of 1744, 99, 100; mistrusted by Spanish court, 105; without reason, 106; proposes plans for Conti's campaign, 107; his instructions to Conti, 109; shares Elizabeth's anxiety about Don Carlos, 112, but not her ideas of

Digitized by Google

Louis XV (cont.)—
strategy, 113; declares war against Austria, 127; letter to Philip V, 129; Philip's reply, 132; adopts plans which he thinks bad in order to please Elizabeth, 141; writes from Freibourg approving destruction of Demonte, 174; disregards French interests, 178; supports Conti, 178; appoints d'Argenson to Foreign Office, 191; marries Dauphin to Infanta Maria Theresa, meets Madame de Pompadour, 193; his instructions to Maillebois, 197; foresees disagreement with Spain, 199; authorizes overtures to Charles Emmanuel, 226–7; autograph draft agreement, 229; letter to Philip V, 232; will not abandon Spain, 234; discloses the negotiations, 235; acquits Charles Emmanuel of bad faith, 247; puts Maillebois under Infant's orders, 248; effect of this, 251; too busy in Flanders to be able to reinforce Italy, 263; will not marry Dauphin to Maria Antonia, 269; Spanish court consequently estranged, 270; to recover its goodwill Louis dismisses Maillebois, 278; sends Boufflers to Genoa, 292; orders Belle-Isle to adopt La Mina's plan, 300; unwilling to offend Charles Emmanuel, 317; sends Richelieu to Genoa, 326; all this war for nothing, 328.
Louis, Dauphin, 193, 269.
Louisa Gabriella (Maria Louisa Gabriella), wife of Philip V, 13, 17.
Louise Elizabeth, daughter of the Regent Orleans, 19.
Luis, King of Spain, 13, 17, 19.
Luxembourg, 159.

Macdonald, General, 77.
Maddalena, Colle della, also called Col de Larche and Col de l'Argentière, joins the valley of the Stura to that of the Ubaye, 61, 133, 137, 141, 143, 146, 150, 151, 152, 163.
Maillebois, Comte de, 110, 130, 137, 139, 197, 225, 230, 235, 236, 237, 280, 281.
Maillebois, Marshal, 7, 15, 39, 59, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 220, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 230, 231, 233, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 268, 271, 273, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 283.
de Mailly, 306, 307, 309, 310, 314, 316, 319.
Marcieu, Comte de, 110, 130, 137, 139, 197, 225, 230, 235, 236, 237, 247, 280, 281.
Maria Anna, daughter of Elizabeth Farnese, 17, 19.
Maria Antonia, 269.
Maria Leszczynska, 19.
Maria Louisa Gabriella, wife of Philip V, 13–17.
Maria Theresa, birth and betrothal, 11; marriage, 24; her succession and good administration, 26; her judicious conduct at Pressburg, 40; negotiates with Frederick, 40; brings troops from Italy and recovers Linz, 40; accepts convention of Turin, 41; orders Traun to attack Montemar, 47; after treaty of Breslau proposes reconquest of Naples, 50; annoyed by Charles Emmanuel's refusal, 52; accepts but resents treaty of Worms, 84–5; reinforces Lobkowitz, 111; orders him to invade Naples, 178; presses British government for naval help against Naples, 182; orders reinforcements to be sent to Charles Emmanuel, 185; Frederick's ultimatum and second Silesian war compel her to recall Charles of Lorraine, 185; orders Lobkowitz to retreat, 186; makes peace with Frederick by treaty of Dresden, 230; sends off 30,000 men to Italy, 230; eager for reconquest of Naples but accepts British plan for invasion of Provence, 273, 317; recalls Botta

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Maria Theresa (cont.)—
and puts Schulenburg in command against Genoa, 290; her determination to retake Genoa, 326; agrees to treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 325; what she accomplished by the war, 328.
Maria Theresa, married Louis Dauphin, 25, 193, 269.
Marie Louise Elizabeth, wife of Philip of Parma, 25, 28, 56, 193.
Marlborough, 7, 67, 68, 263, 273.
Martin, Commodore, 53, 111.
Martinengo, 311, 312.
Mary Anne of Neuburg, 15, 16.
Mathews, Admiral, 50, 51, 53, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 110, 115, 118, 120, 121, 186.
Maulevrier, Lieut.-General, 284, 285, 286.
Maurepas, 82, 99.
Mauriac, Brigadier-General, 137, 146, 290, 291, 292.
Metternich, 1.
La Mina, Marquis de, 63, 64, 65, 66, 73, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 97, 105, 108, 110, 113, 121, 123, 127, 128, 129, 130, 132, 140, 152, 167, 173, 174, 175, 177, 196, 258, 259, 260, 261, 263, 268, 271, 273, 274, 275, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 284, 285, 286, 287, 298, 299, 300, 302, 315, 316, 317, 321, 322.
Mirepoix, Marquis de, 206, 207, 209, 211, 213, 217, 222, 223, 238, 254, 261, 262, 266, 267, 277, 278, 279, 282, 284, 285, 325.
Modena, Francis, Duke of, 48, 49, 50, 183, 187, 229.
Mongardino, Count of, 228, 230, 231, 234, 235, 236.
Montal, General, 220, 223, 238, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245.
Montcalm, 117, 127.
Montemar, Duke of, 36, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 63, 74, 123.
Monteynard, 302.
de Mortagne, 281, 322, 323.

Nadasti, 255, 305, 306, 327.
Napoleon Bonaparte, 7, 93, 94, 157, 158, 159, 176, 200, 201, 286, 301.
Navarro, Marquis de la Victoria, 38, 100, 105.
Negro, Cavelliere de, 49.
Nelson, 105.
de Nesle, the sisters, 27.
Newcastle, Duke of, 33.
Noailles, Maréchal de, 106, 132, 191, 248, 300.
Norris, Admiral, 100.

Orleans, the Regent, 18, 19, 48.
Ormea, Marquis de, 22, 32, 34, 38, 39, 41, 61, 84, 85, 101, 166, 169, 175, 282.
Orsini, Princess, 13, 16.
Ossorio, 83.
Ostend Company, 20.
Ottos, the first three, 4.

Pallavicini, Marquis, 115, 117, 118, 121, 169, 185, 186.
Parma, Duke of, 13.
Payersberg, General, 77.
Pertusati, 217.
Petrarch, 1, 2.
Pezay, 199, 200, 201.
Philip II, 6.
Philip V, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 28, 29, 36, 37, 54, 55, 82, 98, 100, 105, 106, 108, 113, 128, 129, 130, 134, 193, 194, 197, 232, 233, 234, 248, 256, 269.
Don Philip, afterwards Duke of Parma, son of Elizabeth Farnese, 17, 25, 28, 29, 30, 33, 37, 39, 56, 57, 59, 82, 83, 87, 88, 90, 91, 98, 99, 100, 101, 105, 106, 110, 111, 112, 113, 117, 123, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131, 141, 173, 174, 182, 185, 187, 193, 196, 197, 198, 203, 205, 209, 211, 212, 214, 215, 217, 218, 223, 224, 228, 229, 232, 239, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 256, 258, 259, 261, 263, 268, 275, 279, 287, 300, 328.
Pignatelli, 146, 257, 258.
Pizzo, Colla del, west of Ormea, 205, 206.
Platz, 244, 245.
Polyxena of Hesse-Rheinfels, 22.
Pompadour, Madame de, 193.
Pragmatic Sanction, 10, 11, 20, 24, 25, 29, 33, 84.
(Old) Pretender, James III, 18, 99.
(Young) Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, 99, 100, 226.
Priocca, Comte de, 309.
Pusigneux, 284.
Puysieulx, Marquis de, 271, 300, 301.

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Rennes, Bishop of, *see* Vaureal.
Richelieu, 6, 18, 21, 27, 192, 326, 327.
Richmond, Admiral, 104.
Ripperda, 19, 55.
Rocca, General Della, 118, 119, 121, 122, 124, 250, 251, 292, 304, 305, 306.
Roth, 255.
Rowley, 102, 103, 186, 203.
Rudolf, King of Burgundy, 4.

Saint Pierre, Abbé de, 191.
St. Sebastian, Countess of, 22, 312.
Saint-Simon, 54.
Savoy, Count of, 4, 5.
Saxe, Maréchal de, 99, 159, 263, 273.
Schulenburg, Count, 34, 202, 207, 209, 212, 215, 217, 218, 219, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 303, 304, 305, 326.
Second Silesian War, 185.
Sermonio (Zermeno), 223.
Seven Years' War, 159.
Sieges:
their importance, 70.
Asti, 244.
Cuneo, 167, 173.
Demonte, 165.
Freiburg, 174, 185.
Genoa, 287, 326.
Mirandola, 51.
Modena, 49.
Piacenza, 217.
Savona, 267, 282.
Tortona, 214.
Ventimiglia, 279.
Villefranche, 119.
Smollett, 14.
Solaro, 83, 84.
Soro, Colonel, 181, 182, 186, 188, 189, 190.
Stanislas Leszczynski, 20, 21, 23, 24.
Sully, 227.
Susa, Marquis of, 115, 118, 119.

Tencin, Cardinal de, 106.
Tessé, 59.
Du Theil, 191.
Thun, Count and Cardinal, 178, 182.
Torcy, 14.
Torre, Major-General de la, *see* Marquis of Campo Santo.
Traun, Field-Marshal Count Abensburg, 40, 41, 47, 5, 51, 52, 53, 54, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 96, 97, 201, 310.
Treaties:
Aix-la-Chapelle, Treaty of, 328.
Aranjuez, Treaty of, 1742 (between Spain and Modena), 48, 49.
Aranjuez, Treaty of (1745), 195, 263.
Augsburg, League of, 6.
Barrier Treaty, 18.
Belgrade, Treaty of, 25.
Breslau, Treaty of, 50.
Dresden, Treaty of, 230, 231.
Escurial, Treaty of the, 23, 25.
Fontainebleau, Treaty of, 111, 113, 197, 227, 232.
Klein-Schnellendorf, Convention of, 40.
Nymphenburg, Treaty of, 39.
Passarowitz, Peace of, 19.
Quadruple Alliance, 19.
Turin, Convention of, 41, 42, 47, 82.
Turin, Treaty of (1733), 22.
Utrecht, Treaty of, 7, 9, 10, 13, 32, 99, 192.
Worms, Treaty of, 84, 96, 97, 98, 99, 194, 227, 328.
Tuscany, Grand Duke of, 24.

Vauban, 21.
Vaureal, Bishop of Rennes, 113, 129, 130, 131, 232, 233, 248, 301.
Ventimille, Marquis de, 27.
Vernon, Admiral, 25, 36, 39.
Victor, son of Victor Amadeus II, 21.
Victor Amadeus I, 6.
Victor Amadeus II, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 21, 24, 115.
Victor Emmanuel I, 8.
Vieuville, Duke of, 182, 187, 189, 202, 217, 218.
Villarias, 130.
Villars, 59, 196.
Ville, Abbé de la, 235.
Villemur, General, 122, 125, 146, 302, 306, 307, 308, 309, 312, 313, 314, 319, 322.
Villette, 84.

Walpole, 20, 36, 41, 50.
Wentworth, 317, 319.

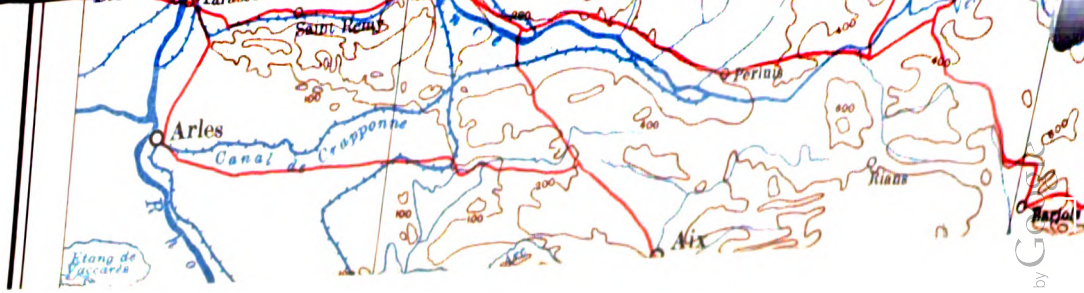
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